The Beat Within

A Weekly Publication of Writing and Art from the Inside

Volume 9.20

Art By Michael Orozco

Editor's Note

It's Monday, "Memorial Day" evening, with plenty of concerned thoughts going through our heads. We thought we'd start this editorial note from home-home, not Beat home, as we put the final touches on yet another superb issue of The Beat Within.

Many of you remember that about a year ago we made an announcement in our editor's note about having to cut some of The Beat program. Well, here we are in the middle of 2004, and we are being asked to do this again, but this time it's a really major sum, try $25,000 a month from our "tiny" program. That's a hefty amount to chop, isn't it? We figure that means we have to eliminate at least forty percent of our workshops, meaning less writing, less typing and editing, and sadly . . . meaning a few people without work.

As we see it now, though it's not finalized, we are talking about cutting workshops from the weaker units, meaning the younger guys may be without a weekly Beat program It is our goal to hold onto the young men in the max units, as well the older guys who are not in max, and the girls' units.

No county is secure at this point. This is a damn shame, too. The best part of The Beat Within has always been the workshops, yet, unfortunately, we cannot get enough funding for the daily-type work, the workshops, the publication, etc. We get funding for everything else, from our after care program to mental health this and that, video diaries, the website, community outreach, blah, blah, blah, but when it comes to The Beat in the hall, no money, no support.

It will still be our goal to produce a weekly. It will still be our goal to have plenty, maybe even more, BWO (Beat Without) contributions in the back pages.

Yeah, us core facilitators will still be around, but as for the others, things will change some. Well, all of our jobs will change a bit. For many of us, it will be our job to do more community advocacy and raise awareness about the work we do in the halls and beyond. Plus, we will probably do more fundraising. Up to this point, the core fundraising for The Beat Within has been left solely in the hands of our executive director, and this can no longer be the case if we are to move forward in the direction we see fit.

With the free time away from our computers, we hope to touch more lives, speak to individuals whom we might have never spoken to. If money comes our way, we'll be back in full force, but as of today, nine years and twenty issues into this incredible work, and no "angel" has come up to secure our work in the future.

As some of you young readers and writers know, we've hired plenty of young people over the years. Well, most likely, our internship program will be cut in half, and we'll become a program where young people do their community service hours. And those who stick with us, those who are self-starters, may find a role with The Beat and will eventually find employment.

Times are tough all over. We are grateful for the jobs we have. We must say working with The Beat Within is a dream job come true! We truly wish we didn't have to change a thing, and could simply allow The Beat to continue to change and grow organically. But we cannot do that any longer, so today we will be forced to make some tough decisions in order to be here six months from now, a year from now, and so on.

All of you know how important our work is. We can't tell you how many people we meet who are in awe of what we do every single week, but given that our staff is small, and given that we do not have many funds, we have to shift our direction some with the hope of coming back to what we all love so much, and that is doing the workshops in the hall for all young writers who are interested. Our roots are in the Hall! It is where it all began!

So tonight, as the clock strikes midnight, as the music of Steve Earle quietly plays on the CD player, we sit behind the computer giving you the latest news, and try to figure out how we can still give every single young person an opportunity, yet cut back some. We're thinking. . . Hmmm . . . Maybe we can do a program every other week in a younger unit or two or three? Maybe we can bring together the top writers from the younger units and do one workshop?

Well, an era is coming to a close. We're sad. We know too many young people who have benefited from The Beat Within over the years. But we're not going anywhere, we're simply starting a new chapter, hopefully a chapter where we'll find a pot of gold, strength, and most definitely, the same type of commitment you've been able to count on all these years.

The beauty of The Beat is that our team of colleagues is as loyal as ever. We hope you readers will understand the position we are in, and assist us in continuing to read, share and contribute to this very important publication we all know and love. With all this said, The Beat is not going to change overnight. The changes will happen gradually. The changes will happen with class and professionalism. It is not our goal to hurt and or surprise anyone. It is our goal to maintain our high standard of work as we continue to touch lives daily, and we encourage you readers to give us any feedback on the matter from, 'cause The Beat Within is as much yours as it is ours.

Remember, money is in control of this matter. If we could work for free we would, but that's not the case. Look at where many of us live, in the most expensive city in the country. Some of our rents are upwards of $1500 a month for a small flat. Gas in the city ranges from $2.39 to $2.79 a gallon. Homelessness is at its worse. Gun violence is out of control. Too many public schools are failing our young. Drugs, from alcohol, weed, crack, E, to heroin, still control too many individuals and the underground economy.

Speaking of the economy, wow, it's in shambles. The country, as we all know, is at war with terrorism, and our young are at war with each other on the streets of America. Will a new president change things up? Make things better? Bring more jobs? Doubt it. So what do we do? Well, the choice is yours . . . We know what we're going do, we're going to do our jobs, have faith, and believe that what we are doing is making a difference in the readers' lives. Shhh, we know it is. Daily we receive letters from you faithful, telling us how touched and moved you were/are by The Beat Within presence/publication. That's priceless, yet we can barely fund the most important element, part, piece of The Beat Within program! What's wrong with the foundation world!? What's up juvenile halls? Rich professional people? You educators? Don't you realize by ignoring the work in the hall we are forced to give up on our young people in the system?

Help us, help the readers and writers of The Beat Within. Shoot us your ideas, give us leads about strengthening our programs. We're listening. We'd appreciate whatever it is you can do, 'cause like we said in 1996 when we started this ride, we are in this until the wheels fall off, and we must say, the wheels are shaky tonight.

Okay, the topics read and discussed prior to the writing in this issue were: "Disturbing Mental Images — In the last couple of weeks, we have all seen some very disturbing images on television. We have seen naked Iraqi prisoners being abused by American soldiers. We have seen an act of retaliation in the form of an American being decapitated by masked men. And who can forget the image of jet planes crashing into the twin towers on September 11?

Besides these recent images from the news, we have all seen hundreds of acts of murder, rape, war, and violence of all kinds in movies and television.

Drawing on these images — as well as the mental pictures of real events in your own life, from car crashes to the premature death of a homie or family member — please describe a mental image/a disturbing picture you have in your mind that you wish you could erase."

Our second topic was: "Is there anyone in your life you owe an apology or anyone who owes you an apology?"

Lastly, "I woke up this morning and . . ."

We certainly found a number of POW (Piece of The Week) recipients in these writings. Let's first praise and acknowledge the 150 Crew writers! Big props to Toni, Lil' Creep, Dolla Deesa, Ben Fireball and Tishay for their dedication and commitment to themselves and us readers. We'd also like to recognize The Hulk, from San Mateo for his on-topic apology entitled, "One Last Time." What can we say about the new thinking of Diablyto from SF/YGC, his POW, "Thank You God," has so much insight! And out of the same unit in SF/YGC, Lil' Beez steps up huge to give us a glimpse of his young life in "A Child's Image." Equally powerful is Conrad, from Marin, who takes off running with his on-topic piece, "When I Woke Up This Morning." Congratulations once again to our POW recipients, as well as to our Co-POW and standout writers!

Don't forget our tenth editor's note writing contest, which is open to all readers of The Beat Within . . . We want to know what your all-time favorite movie is and why. We are curious about why this movie moves you so much. Tell us how it relates to you. Tell the readers about a time, maybe the first time, you saw the movie. We want the inviting details about why this movie will always have an important place on your movie shelf/heart. Be creative when painting the picture of this special, special movie.

With this said, the contest deadline for submissions is July 31, 2004. We will award four prizes/money orders for our favorite pieces. Our top prize is a $100 money order for first place. Followed by a $50 money order for second place, and for third and fourth place, $25 money orders. With this said, good luck writers in attempting to create a moving and telling piece about your all-time favorite movie. We encourage all of you editor's note readers to take this topic on! Now take us to the movies!

All right readers, we gave you an earful on what we are up against. Sorry to dwell on the matter. Now we want to move on and dedicate this issue to an outstanding writer from our weekly workshops in San Mateo County, the amazing Broken Glass, who, for a number of months now, has delivered incredible pieces of work, in particular, her poetry. We are honored and touched at how loyal she is to her writing and to our program. Thank you, Broken Glass. You will always have a place in the hearts of The Beat Within. Need we tell you, you are a powerful writer who has touched many, many lives? Thank you for believing in yourself, and for taking your writing to such an important level. You have our respect and admiration!

Till the next one, we're thinking good thoughts!

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The Beat Within, a weekly newsletter of writing and art by incarcerated youth, is published by Pacific News Service.

At The Beat Within, we go through a lot of trouble to censor inappropriate sexual remarks, foul language, and gang references. There is enough tension in our commuities already–we don't aim to bolster it. It is in The Beat's interest to promote peace and unity. Our goal is to educate one another.

The Beat Within publishes the opinions and views expressed by the participants in our workshops. This is simply the pure voice of the youth. The views you read do not necessarily reflect those of the publisher, editor or staff. All rights are reserved. Nothing from this publication can be reproduced without our written permission.

To our writers: What you write could be hazardous to you. Your words have consequences, and could be used to incriminate you. Try to illuminate your feelings and viewpoints without running the risk of providing ammunition for those who might use your words against you.

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Art: Much props to everyone for the great art this week.

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www.thebeatwithin.org

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Pieces Of the Week

The Documentary Of Facing My Reality

Ever since I was twelve they documented me
A criminal, let me tell you my autobiography
They said I was a menace to society
Basing what I did on my insanity
I've been stuck in the system a few years, almost three
Never knowing how long it's going to be
Before a date is issued so I can leave
I'll do anything to leave, even get down on one knee
Just so I can be able to see
How much change has happened to my city
To go take a dip in the sea
To be able to go on a shopping spree
But for now it's just a fantasy
I have to wake up each morning to face my reality
That only the staff have the key
Since I'm Mexican, I never got pressure from the B or the C
But I got pressure from a whole other variety
I chose not to join any gang in any community
Instead I decided to be a p-i-m-p
But with all due sincerity
I thought I would never have to pay such a huge fee
Of being stuck in here with no hope of getting free
I think I might as well get to knocking out teeth
But I stop myself so the court won't think I'm mean
I was young, dumb, and didn't wanna listen
Never thought I would get caught and end up in the system
I thought I would be able to always glisten
Until I really got to trippin'
I think about all the stuff I'm missing
I think of the life I could be living
The path I chose is only leading me to prison
I never thought about a path that takes me straight
But I did want to be somebody great
I wanted to be the best criminal in the state
I know most of you can relate
Not for a second did I think this would be my fate
I wanna do right but it's a little too late
I wanna start over with a clean slate
Now let's get to the story that I wanna say
In 1988 I was born in LA
On the fourtheenth of November, yeah that was the day
I don't know what time it was or how much I weighed
My best memory is when we went up to the mountains and I finally rode a sleigh
Other than that my childhood was as beautiful as rough, dried up clay
One day my parents finally decided we should move away
So when I was nine we packed up and moved to the bay
We tried to go to church every Sunday
But I got bored and decided to go my way
But I did end up having to pay
My parents whooped my ass almost every day
My friends taught me how to commit a crime
But never told me if I got caught I'll have to do time
They ever even gave me a sign
So I just got to sellin' nickels and dimes
They told me to watch my back so I carried a nine
I thought if a fool tried to rob me, I'll have to get mine
I thought of it as a job, I did it full time
I thought my so-called job was divine
My parents caught on and told me I couldn't do it, bottom line
So I did it during school and the daytime
Eventually all that stuff I chose to decline
I stopped doing it completely, not even part time
'Cause my parents beat my ass 'cause they heard it through the grapevine
From then on I had a curfew
I didn't like it but I didn't argue
They started whoopin' my ass for hangin out with my crew
So then the anger at my parents just grew
From then I just totally withdrew
Today I wish they knew
I wish I would've gave 'em a clue
Of what I was about to do
I wish all my mistakes I could just simply redo
I know you wish you could do that too
It got to the point where I couldn't go anywhere
So I just stopped giving a care
I ran away saying I wouldn't go back there
I didn't know how much trouble I was in, I wasn't fully aware
I just thought the way they was treating me was unfair
And I thought selling drugs would make me a millionaire
I wanted to be ballin' like Steve McNair
Have a girlfriend plus different affairs
But that fantasy and my life you just can't compare
'Cause my mistakes led me to a life of despair
Everytime I went out, I made sure I had my strap
Plus my cd player so I could listen to rap
I had been jumped before so that's the reason for that
I didn't know it was coming, it happened in a snap
I never thought I would walk into a trap
One dude even hit me in the head with a bat
That day I thought I was a goner, I thought it was a wrap
God, I wish it would've just been a slap
I knew who it was and I was gonna get him back
The police asked me who it was but I ain't no rat
I didn't listen, still did stuff I wasn't allowed
Still doing my thing, hangin' out with the wrong crowd
When I was supposed to be in the house, I still went out
I was still roamin' the streets up and about
Even though I was bad, out of school, I didn't drop out
I still thought an education, you shouldn't be without
I thought it was cool. was always so proud
Never thought I'd get caught, didn't even have a doubt
But look at me today, look at me now
"I'm never coming back." I always vow
But I keep coming back, some way, some how
If this is my last time, only God will know
It's up to him if I'll be as famous as Vincent Van Gough
Or do something stupid and end up on death row
It's up to him if I die or if I'll grow
If I live, I'm gon' start getting my legit dough
'Cause my hustlin' times are over, that was a long time ago
If I see the light, that's the way I'm goin'
The system finna be mad 'cause I ain't coming back no mo'
My success is just gonna come, just naturally flow
And then I'ma retire to Puerto Rico or Mexico
It just depends where my wife wants to go
And I'm gonna have a wife that I love, not a hoe
Back to reality, on May seventeenth I go to court
I know my PO gave the judge a bad report
I hope he'll stay on the positive to support
I hope he won't use YA as a resort
I hope the whole idea of YA, he'll abort
I don't belong in YA, I'm not in that sort
I've been in many group homes, not one did I pass
Did bad at the house, but great in class
My PO told me to be good or my ass was grass
I just waved it off like it was nothing but gas
My chances got slimmer by the minute,
like the sand in an hourglass
My best chance is to try to get a deal like they gave Broken Glass
Stay in here a year, every Sunday goto mass
But I vow all of this, I will surpass
I went the wrong way as a kid as I was being misled
Most of the good advice of life was left unsaid
I've learned my lesson, it got through my head
But it's up to you to listen to all the advice that's been said
And think about it while you sit up in bed
Go the right way before you end up dead
Remember one thing, "Tears of hurt have to be shed."
Don't keep them inside until you reach your deathbed
That's the worst thing I dread
'Cause if you doin' life, you'll never get ahead

-Toni, 150 Crew

From The Beat: This is a tragic yet powerful epic of your life, struggles, lessons learned and of hope too for you and others. You put it down so well and all in rhyme. You got skills, Toni! We hope everything works out to your advantage. What was the main difficulty you had in the home and group homes and how will you work it out? You are capable of doing so much in life. We encourage you to not let anything get in the way of you furthering your education.

It's up to him if I'll be as famous as Vincent Van Gough
Or do something stupid and end up on death row

Rest In Peace Snoopy

One day my homies called me, telling me to go to Berkeley High after school. So I went.

I got there kind of late. So I started riding my bike down, and I seen them. They told me they had started walking down, because I took too long. So, anyway, we were walking down to my friend's house, when I seen hella police cars going to the park where all the homeboys kick it at.

So I wanted to go see what happened. But my homeboys said not to go, because the police would mess with me for being around gang members. So we get to my homeboys house. Now, he lives a couple of blocks from the park, so one of his neighbors walks up and says, "Miguel got hit by a car, right by the park!"

So I go to the park, and I see a puddle of blood and a white truck over a go-cart. I asked an older homeboy what had happened, and he told me that Snoopy died. I couldn't believe it! He told me that he'd died on the way to the hospital.

As I was looking at the truck over the go-cart, I asked, "Why is his clothes there?" And they told me, "They had to cut his clothes off."

I thought I should've went to the park when I seen all those cops, and I was hella mad that I didn't. Then I found out TASK force hit him and spun him out — then that's when the white truck hit him. And TASK force was not after him but had just hit the corner too fast!

I was just with him two days before he died, when he had wanted to buy my bike off of me.

Since it was the police's fault, we all started getting mad! We took down the yellow tape and went to where he got hit — and we put flowers and rags. And the police tried to stop us, but they couldn't.

So I wanna say rest in peace, Snoopy. You are gone but never forgotten. You will be missed.

-Lil' Creep, 150 Crew

From The Beat: We've had several pieces about the death of Snoopy (aka Miguel), but yours is by far the most comprehensive and coherent. What a terrible waste for a young man to die like that. We know he had a lot of friends in and out of Berkeley High. He must have been someone very special, and his senseless death diminishes us all. Thanks for telling us about the impromptu altar in his memory, and thanks for the whole story. RIP Miguel aka Snoopy.

A Child's Images

My images go back to three years old
Me and pops, homeless, shiverin' in the cold
Stayin' in cheap hotels downtown
My worst image was seein'
My father in a hospital gown
Times were hard, every dime spent wisely
But makin' it through these times
Is what I think defined me
'Cause now I'm quick-witted
Mentally tough, bejeweled and fitted
'Cause now hard times passed
Cash now is passed through my hands
Images of sleepin' in my pop's truck
Made me resort to any use of violence
To make some quick bucks
But it got me facin' seven years and eight months
I was never known to drink or smoke blunts
Just a dumb kid who was short on his luck
I smoked cigarette butts
Images....

-Lil' Beez B4, SF/YGC

From The Beat: We wonder how we would have developed if we had been forced to sleep in our pop's truck growing up. In a country as rich as ours, no child should have to live as you did. We're glad it toughened you up for the reality of life, but we wonder what life would have held for you if you had a bedroom of your own, and all the things that go with it. We also worry about that cash that is now passing through your hands, because we know a lot of folks who've managed to get their hands on lots of money for a minute — and then had weeks, months and years to think about it from the cold comfort of a cell...

One Last Time

I apologize...
Every time I open my eyes, I wish I could've been wise
Feeling for others' pain, and letting tears run down my eyes like rain
All I wanted was to have fun and all that is far done
Drugs brought me down while you had to feel the pain without revealing a frown
Keeping my future in front of my eyes, when all I spoke was a thousand lies

I apologize..
Now I recognize
That all my lies have created tension and cries
My parents' presence fills me with shame and guilt
My image of a relationship with my parents needs to be rebuilt
I see them growing older in my mind
Getting fragile and thin while I serve time
The feeling hits me right in the gut
And I begin to believe that I must give up
I need to stop living in the past and think in the present

I apologize...
I hope one day everything will be OK
And I can look back and feel proud of my track
I got through these times due to your great upbringing of mine
Memories of friendship allow me to see
And envision the fulfillment of life you grace to me

-The Hulk, San Mateo

From The Beat: It is not just the heartfelt apology that moves us in this wonderfully written poem, but the specifics things you cite, as well as the focus on creating a better future. One thing we know for sure: You can look back right now and feel proud of owning your own responsibility, proud of expressing it, and proud of making efforts to repair the damage. All are signs of the mature young man you are becoming, and it is both a pleasure and an honor to be given a glimpse into the ongoing process. We hope you share this with your parents; we know they would feel proud of you for writing it.

Pieces Of the Week

Thank You, God

During the curse of my crazy life, I've seen a lot of stuff that most people don't normally see. I've seen people get shot, I've seen people get run over, I've seen people get stabbed. I even got stabbed myself.

But to tell you the truth, there's stuff that hurt more than all that stuff that I just mentioned, and that's seeing your family for the last time, to see your family walk out that big door knowing that you're not gonna see them and your not going to be able to hug them, kiss them, or talk to them whenever you want to. Today that happened to me.

I seen my daughter for the last time in years. And the worst thing I seen is that she was sick and I ain't gonna be able to be with her while she gets better. That's probably the most painful experience that I've had in my life, but I don't wanna go mad and crazy.

I want to thank God 'cause my daughter is out of the hospital, and she's getting better. I want to thank God for giving me another chance to change my life by bringing me into this place and helping me open my eyes to the reality of life. Thank you God.

-Diablyto B4, SF/YGC

From The Beat: If you keep writing (and thinking) like this, Diablyto, we will just have to give you a running POW... We feel honored to see the changes in your thinking since we first met you reflected in each new writing assignment for The Beat. We know that your life will not be easy, but we also know it would be much, much harder if you continued down the path you were on. We have such admiration for anyone who can examine themselves, find things they want to change, and then go about changing them. Whether you know it or not, other youngsters coming up behind you are reading your words and feeling them. You are having an impact. Keep it up.

When I Woke Up This Morning

I didn't wake up this morning. I haven't woken up in ninety-six days. I'm still lying in my bed at home, sweating, crying in my sleep. I'm shaking in my bed, unable to wake up from this terrible nightmare. I dream of bars and locked doors, of anger, hate, rage. I dream of things worse than death.

I've been dreaming for ninety-six days.

In my dream, in my sleep, I have no innocence.

I have no pride or dignity.

I have no ambition.

I have no self-esteem.

Ninety-six days and I still haven't woken up.

They watch me, they stand over me, question me, shake me. I keep shaking, keep crying. I'm sleeping, now, in my own sweat, my own tears, trapped in a nightmare of being trapped in being trapped in being trapped. I pray to wake up, but God has forsaken me. He laughs at me through the clouds, the walls, bars, heart, and soul.

When I wake up in the morning, will life seem better? By comparison, will I be in paradise? Will life seem so much better after the horrors of a cage?

I doubt it.

I won't ever forget the people who condemned me to a cell, locked me in a cell. I'll never forget the people who destroyed my chances at life, their white-collar jobs that put me in an orange-collar hell. How do I take from them what I deserve? How do I rob them of their ambition, dignity, and pride? How do I get mine back? Ninety-six days on a misdemeanor. Ninety-six days for trying to escape a horrid world, only to spend ninety-six days in an even worse world?

Whether I'm shaking, crying, dying in my bed, trapped in a nightmare where my only options are waking up or suicide, I can't wake up. Or if this is real, if my life is in fact over, and my only option is suicide, either way, I shouldn't have to be trapped in this limbo, this pull-point between life and death.

-Conrad, Marin

From The Beat: Feeling trapped can be really scary. But somewhere in your psyche you know the authorities can't keep you forever, even if they're messing you around now. Is what's really bothering you your life on the outs? Before you were busted, how did you regard your life? Did you basically like, approve of it? If not, how would you like your life to be? The period of going from being a boy to becoming a man can be really confusing. You don't have control of your life yet. But soon you'll be free. How will you fashion your life, when it's up to you?

If You Really Want To Know

See it's one game to this life only different position
it ain't 'bout havin' the strap, it's gettin' caught wit' the smiffen
it's all a machine from the fiends to the K-9's sniffin',
think all that money go to charity who they kiddin'?
drug dealas is no different from these politicians
'cept they own the farm while we tend the chickens
Reagan had his mind made wit' or wit'out our permission
Hoods is gold mines in these urban times figured he'd be trippin'
Not to cash out and he didn't have to personally pass out
Packages just distribute thru the poor hungry as savages
Government created these days of A-K's under the mattresses
Kids can't play, parents afraid, they get blazed wit' strays,
now they backs is split,
At elementary schools lil' dudes is packin' clips
Makin' these lil' girls think they have to strip just to have some chips
If you ain't for genocide but not in the form of a killing spree
You gon' look at what happens to X, King, Huey P and Kennedy
Institutionalized fo' we even hit the pen
So you can't tell me I'm this way from constantly comin' in
I stink of sin as if finishin' a fifth of Seagram's Gin
But do I have the right to blame it on the presidents?

-Dolla Deesa, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Wow, this is some deep and philosophical stuff. You pour so many images of the life you have seen and lived into your lines and drown us in thought. You are right to compare the street hustle to the business and system's dirty dealings. But why add to the negativity of the world and kill your community (mothers, fathers, daughters and sons) with your poison? Your final question takes things back to personal responsibility. So what will you do, build or destroy yourself and those around you? Great poetry, we truly appreciate the dedication and loyalty to yourself and to us, as you step up and fearlessly read your work to the delight of the class. Write on!

I have no pride or dignity.
I have no ambition.
I have no self-esteem.

When I Get Free

uncontrollable emotions of agony
feeling as if somebody constantly
stabbing me
first slowly then rapidly
not being able to understand the meaning
of why each day in my cell
these walls get smaller
so lonely —
with no arms to console me
boldly i stand my ground
like a king wearing a crown
tears of a clown
tell jokes to cover my frown
for release is what i pray
each and every minute of the day
dry tears is what
i got in my dark little box
when no one's there
i let them drop
but when i come out
the only evidence is the trace
are those that have dried to my face
i'm longing for the day
that i get to walk out the door
the love i have is hidden
inside a secret place
everyone has a mask
that they wear on their face
but some leave no trace
a good chameleon
is what we must become
get where others can't
blend in with the enemy
to win against the world
seems impossible
but it's possible
trust me
for if we
continue to dream
anything can happen
from something truly horrifying
something beautiful can blossom
a caterpillar waiting to
transform into a butterfly
angels with broken wings
soon will fly
we each a star
in the big movie in the sky
someday we will be really free
in my dreams it's what i see
we can't be caged forever
you see my body here
in this institution but
my mind is free
can't nobody
take that from me
so to the police
holla when you see me
when i get free

-Ben, 150 Crew

From The Beat: You take us on a poet's odyssey, exploring interiorities unknown before necessity called them into being. Seeing is believing, and you help us see that freeing your mind gives sight to the blind and hope to all mankind. It is a terrible price to pay, incarceration day after day, but at the core where you've never been before, is displayed a transformative faith in a lyric's sublime transcendence of time's imprisoning sentence. Thus angels bring a power divine, and your soul sings,

Pimpin, You Owe Me

Suckin' me in a life full of pain
Getting me caught in this so called game
You told me hoe up or blow up
So, I hoed up
But every time I was in pain
You never showed up
Saying you love me, and all of the above
But why every time I'm around you always acting like a hoodlum
and a thug?
Bring in G's just to satisfy your greedy needs
Pleasing you by getting on my knees
They say pimpin' and hoeing
Is the best thing going
But what you really ain't knowing
This life is full of hurt and pain
To the deadly secret lies of the game
You owe me way much more than money and fame
Them cars, clothes, phones didn't mean a thang
While I was walking up and down the track
Making sure you get paid
And letting them tricks get laid
Day in and day out of cashing you out
But you ain't even showing me what life is all about
Taking me to Vegas and saying you showing me the world
But baby I'm more then just diamonds and pearls
Pimpin', this ain't even what I want in the world
Saying I'm yo' one and only girl
You must take me for some fool
Too bad I ain't gon' be there no more
when you break the rules
Pimpin, you owe me, but don't trip
'Cause Ms. Westbrook told me I'm more than this
Bye pimpin'
I'm through.

Fireball, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Wow, Fireball, you continue to touch us with your words. You are a strong woman. This is a beautiful, yet tragic flow. Goodbye pimpin'! It makes us so happy to hear that. Obviously, it's not so easy to get out of the game. How do you plan to do it? You shared your experience after leaving Walden House with us; what did you learn from that? You can say goodbye, you NEED to say goodbye, but can you stay away? The game don't love you, the game loves nobody. Listen to Ms. Westbrook, you are more than this. Show the world your potential!

I Shall Not Fear

i shall not fear anyone
whose flesh is like my flesh
whose blood leaks like my own
whose heart beats as mine beats
i shall not fear one whose tongue
speaks of wickedness as if i can't
i shall not fear those who act savagely
as if i can't act wildly and uncivilized
i shall not fear any man who stands against me
as though i can't stand at the same level as he
i shall not fear one who is strong physically as if i can't be
i shall not fear any man or woman who will say
they can do to thee as if i can't do it to them myself
i shall not fear sneakiness as if i'm not prepared
i shall not fear faults as if i can't take responsibility
i shall not fear forgiving as if i don't forget
i shall not fear giving as if i don't accept
i shall not fear one who can make me perish
as though i can't do the same as they do to me
that's why i say i shall not fear

-Tishay, 150 Crew

From The Beat: This is a powerful poem, strong and proud, written to be read out loud. And when it was, it received applause. We particularly admire the lines about faults, forgiving, and giving. Some will respect you more for being capable of wicked and uncivilized behavior, because it is the only flavor they know; yet your poem aspires to a higher level beyond the brutal logic of the devil's show. Because they lack your fearless soul, they may never manage to become healthy or whole.

Co-Pieces Of the Week

Owe Me

You owe me an apology for never being here.
It was like you never seemed to care.
Never seen any of my graduations or been to any of my birthdays.
Never here when I needed my father in the worst way. No father figure to look up to.
Looked up to the older heads in the crew.
My mom was a single parent who was happy to get off welfare.
Worked three jobs, no child support, did you care?
Now when I'm in the hardest situation in my life,
you're trying to give me advice.
What you know about doin' right?
You been in and out of jail most of your life.

-Peanut Head, San Mateo

From The Beat: What is it about some men who think they can skip the important part of a child's upbringing, and then jump in at the end and pretend to be the father they never were? You're right, he does owe you an apology. Have you ever told him this to his face? What would he say if he read this hard-hitting, painful poem?

My Apology

The person I need to apologize to
Is the person who birthed me
To my mom
I want to say I'm sorry
Sorry for all I've put you through
You didn't deserve it
That's the truth
Sorry for stealing
Sorry for lying
Sorry for all the nights
You sat and cried
While I was out there
Getting high
Sorry for all those
Sleepless nights
Sorry for returning to Juvy
For the fifth time
I'm sorry for everything
Please accept my apology

-Tim, Marin

From The Beat: Lovely and sincere poem for your mom. Why don't you send it to her? Also send her your wonderful poem, "Changing Places." She'll really appreciate them. If you're really sorry you're going to do any more lying, stealing or getting high. How can you make it up to her?

Not once do I remember I've heard my mom ever say "I love you" or anything

My Apology

The person I owe an apology most to I would say is my mother! I think I owe her an apology 'cause I've put her through a lot of shhh for the past few years. When she comes to visit me every Saturday, I feel bad, I even tell her not to come porque it's as hard for me to see her leave as it is for her!

When I'm in my room, I kick back and think of all the crazed shhh I used to do to her. Like I used to come home high off of crystal, and see, me and my mom never really got along, we're always constantly fighting. Well yeah, I used to come home high and she would argue with me or tell me to look at myself in the mirror and love myself more — big or small, fat or thin — and I would get mad, I guess 'cause she was right. And one thing would lead to another, and next thing I know, we're boxing!

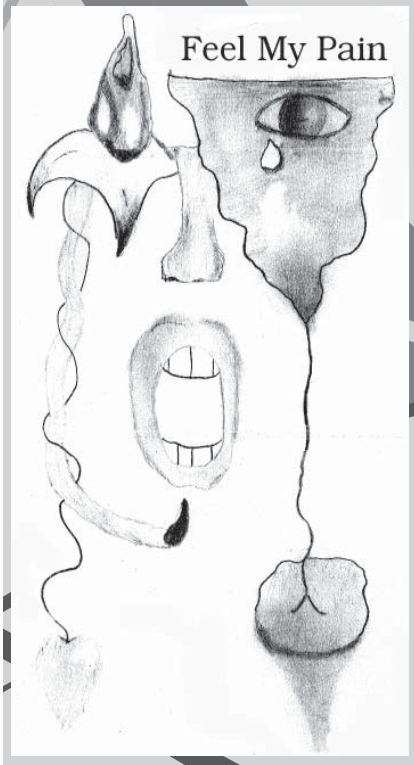
I don't know, I just think of that stuff. I know it's been a lot of shhh 'cause it's 8 kids in total, pero what I felt I needed, I never got. Not once do I remember I've heard my mom ever say "I love you" or anything, yet she always seems to tell that to my carnales in front of me and it makes me feel hella . . . I don't know. That's why I turned to my gang at a young age, and I guess, drugs!

I've never felt protected at my own home either. Don't get it twisted, I've been through hella shhh although I don't show it! Pero now I guess I should have known since the beginning that I wasn't going to get or feel all the love and affection I needed from my family, knowing and seeing now my mom works her ass off to pay the bills and rent, knowing we barely have enough. But at the time, I was too young to understand, and now that I do, it's kinda too late 'cause I'm too deep in my gang and game. I know it's never too late, though now, I mean drug-wise, like I said, I ain't going to stop banging, and if I do decide to, it ain't going to be easy. Like they say, easier said than done!

Well, I'm out, take care, keep yo' heads up and neva let no one get you down. Stay coo'.

-Giggles GU, SF/YGC

From The Beat: Giggles, this piece is so honest and insightful. We're sorry that you're mom has not been able to be there for you and give you the love you want and deserve. The fact that she comes to visit every week makes us believe she loves you but that she just can't seem to say it. Do you think you'd ever be able to tell her that you need and want her to tell you she loves you? Maybe your mom feels like she owes you an apology for not being there and the guilt keeps her from showing you how much she cares. We just hope you find the strength and love to give up both of your addictions — drugs and the gang life. Knowing what led you to both of these things can be the knowledge that lets you give them both up. Excellent writing.



Co-Pieces Of the Week

D-Minus Awakened

I woke up this morning and realized where I was heading in my life — nowhere! I stopped and stepped outside of myself and said, "I'm seventeen years old and locked up in juvie."

Where is a young adult going when he is locked up and about to be an "adult" on his own? I did a lot of thinking and decided it was time to turn my life around and get my act together.

I have a long history of using drugs, stealing from my parents, and basically doing whatever I could to acquire what I wanted, from drugs to money, whatever got me what I wanted. Finally, I lost it — and became greedy. I wanted too much.

I let it all get to my head and got caught up and locked up. But during my time on lockdown, I was able to think things through. As my head cleared, I began to see what I had lost: trust, respect, hope — and my future, if I continue on the same path.

Now, I want to thank to my parents for helping me get to where I am today, full of resolve, having made a decision to change. On Friday the twenty-first of May, I will be released, and I plan on returning to society as a rehabilitated person who has something to contribute in life.

So, if I owe anyone an apology, it's myself — as well as my family for all the pain I put them through; thanks for all your help and support! Love …

-D-Minus, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Your piece puts your name in clear focus: D-Minus, as in "almost failed". We'd give you an F — with the opportunity to repeat for full credit! It sounds like you have a lot of love and support at home; but you need to earn their trust and respect (it appears they still have hope). Even more importantly, you need to earn your own trust and respect. Making a decision to change is crucial, but trust and respect grow day by day as you prove yourself in your new ways of thought and action. Habitual ways of thinking and feeling don't disappear overnight. And if you plan to quit using drugs, expect to struggle on days you wake up craving, tripping, or raving — and a tougher fight at night. Still, it can be done! You clearly have the intelligence needed, plus motivation and desire. Congratulations on your decision. Keep feeding that fire.

Who Am I?

Is it when I am told "no" I tend to flip out? Or is it all the anger built up from long ago?

My family tells me if I don't change that, the way I'm living at home isn't going to be the same. They all were right. Now my days are no longer spent at home, but behind walls of stone.

By now I should have realized that this isn't the life, the life I've strived. So I ask myself, who am I? Am I someone who at one time set their life goal? Or am I someone full of rage waiting to let it all go. My thoughts race back and forth to find an answer. I can't, I am lost, and it's unknown.

I lay back and wonder how could I have hurt my mother and father. Tears of rage build up inside and soon I began to cry, releasing what was hidden from behind. But will I be fine?

-Natalie, 150 Crew

From The Beat: You're asking yourself good questions. You are all those things. When our minds race back and forth, they are working. The fact that you are asking yourself these things is a good sign. Without change, we don't grow. You can determine what kind of person you are or want to be. You can't let your anger control you. You can set a new life goal today. What do you want to do? Where will your life take you?

Love You Minty Eyes

This is Lil' Snap, and my mental images are hard to take — some things that are true I don't like to imagine, and sometimes they come in dreams.

One mental image that really bugs me happened when one day my girl went to a party. Now I been with her for two years at the time, and she was sixteen and went to a party — and got raped by a guy while the other guy held her down!

When she came forward and told me, I was so mad I wanted to kill them! But the only thing was, she couldn't see their faces — so she couldn't identify them.

Everything she told me about what happened, still hurts me every single night when I think about my baby Minty Eyes — and I wish with all my heart that it had never happened. But she is going to counseling and getting help. Plus I'm still here for her.

It hurts you, too, when something terrible happens to the one you love. Love …

-Domo, 150 Crew

From The Beat: As your dreams testify, there may be no image more disturbing than rape. It is a deep act of trust for her to have shared this experience with you, and even though it hurts, it is a gift of love to share her pain. To have murdered the rapists though, would merely have added to her burden of torment — because she would have lost you as well! You might want to see a counselor, too, so you can deal with your rage, turn the page, and be there to help her heal, with all the patience, acceptance and love from you she needs to feel.

Yelrebmik

That night I couldn't think
That night I couldn't see
Things are happening that shouldn't be
I was all acting cool while everybody wasn't
I didn't know what was happening while she was dying
They was tryin' tah hide it at first
But I knew she was 'bout tah burst
She was cryin'
While I was buyin'
I heard the news dat she was down
I was like shhh, "why, what happened?" with a frown
I went to the hospital where she was at
I saw her lyin' on her mat
She looked so innocent, defenseless
I left her there when I had tah go
Three days later she was gone
For some reason, I had a feeling that her work was done
I have a guardian angel always with me
Well guess what? Her name is Kimberly
Six feet deep wasn't a good place tah sleep
That's what she always said…
Angels all y'all wear white on the date of mah bed
Kim, I miss you…
I hope tha world went backwards…
Yelrebmik… Always with you, Baby Kim

-Gelo, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Your friend Kimberly sounds like a great person and we're sorry that she had to say goodbye. It isn't often that we meet people that make our hearts fly! Kimberly's new home is now in your heart. Just make sure to never let the memories part. So now and then when you look in the sky and see a shooting star, that's Kimberly saying hello from afar.

Co-Pieces Of the Week

Disturbing Images

When I first laid eyes on the horrible ordeal that was happening in Iraq, I was totally shocked. I didn't believe my eyes. I was also shocked at the American soldiers and American government for not practicing what they preach.

I really felt bad for the Iraqi prisoners because the American government hit them where it really hurts.

The disturbing pictures really affected me in a lot of ways. The worse part is that the soldiers were happy about the suffering of the Iraqis.

I really felt bad for the American soldier that got his head cut off because he probably didn't have anything to do with the torture of the Iraqis.

I really want to erase these disturbing pictures from my mind because it's horrible to think about.

-Abbas, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Not too many people in juvy are worried about the war. You think outside your life and about others and this is compassionate of you and helps you put things in perspective. Try your best to select what you see and hear, knowing how much you can handle. It really is too much these days — in the world and individually. During such ugly times, what beauty can you remember that exists in your life and this world to give you a break from it all? As for Nick Berg, RIP, who is the man who was so violently executed on video, he was not a soldier, he was a young man looking for work in Iraq.

What We Need To Do

What we need to do is get strong as a people.
Black and Brown,
we need to stand for what's right, let's fight.
Damn when will they let us be free,
free to live, free to fly, free to be one as a people.
Shhh first we need to get
all the daddies to take care of their kids
and be men for the first time in their lives.
Why sleep with a woman,
if you ain't gon' be with that woman,
take care of that woman,
be there for that woman?
Moms, don't worry 'bout him,
if you got to do it on your own
then show that little boy
and girl how to take care of their kids.
See without a woman,
the man knows he is not that strong
that's why he runs to the woman as if she is his mom.
So take this to the head and they'll never say that black and brown are dead.

-D-Moe, 150 Crew

From The Beat: What a powerful message to people of color and to fathers or fathers-to-be. We know all of what you say is possible. Just stay strong and don't let things get in the way of your ideals, especially greed.

Trapped For Life

Well everybody knows the spider web tattoo. The definition is really known as trap! I will get this tattoo when I get out. My two older brothers have the tattoo, my three uncles have the tattoo, as well as my other brother. It's kind of a family ritual.

My relatives get to identify with the struggle of their lives. The American government, the federal system, the criminal system is a business, number one money making machine in the entire world of the USA country. I call the American society the land of the false dreams, aka deep depression.

I recently got released from Alameda County Juvenile Hall beginning of May. I went to a group home A. New Horizons in Napa Valley. The staff seemed to really like how I presented myself, the way I talked, the whole nine yards. However, when they seen my violent and disturbed side, they automatically switched on me, called the sheriff ten minutes after. I chilled in Napa County jail, then got sent back to Alameda Juvenile Hall max unit, on no charge, no violation of probation, but a time out.

What is this system all about? I controlled my thoughts and didn't even confront anybody. They overheard a conversation I had with myself. Oh my God, I can't wait until I get back in the outside world and live a real life again. However I know when I get out I'm going to be trapped again like the spider in the spider web on my arm.

Peace, happiness, and don't trust nobody but yourself. It will pay off.

-Jeremy, 150 Crew

From the Beat: As far as America, yeah it has its bad side. Sometimes who we are and how we see ourselves is how we see our surroundings. You did well by controlling your actions towards others. How can you communicate more thoroughly with your next placement (or the same one if they take you back) what your needs and habits are so that they can be more understanding? Never the less, what's up with a program in the system that accepts you in, yet doesn't know your past? Plus, you saying that you will be trapped sounds like a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Apologies

The person I feel I owe an apology to the most is my little brother. I never had a big brother or a stable dad, so I went through life without a role model. And when he was born I said to myself I would be a role model for him so he didn't have to go through life making stuff up as he went along.

Well, the past two years I've been home four months and it wasn't like I was somewhere doing something respectable. Nothing he could really use. I haven't really taught him anything except what not to do. When I am home, I can't really teach him anything because he sees where I've been, and where it look like I'm going, and he rightfully says to himself, "Why should I listen to him?"

To everyone else in my family, I'm sorry, but they're all grown up and they can deal. They've got enough wisdom or experience of their own. But my little brother is still learning, and because of what I've done, I can't teach him… Yet.

-Brendan, San Mateo

From The Beat: Do you think that if you had thought about your little brother before you did whatever it was that brought you here, it would have stopped you? How are you going to make it up to him when you get home? What do you think is the most important thing you can give him? We think the answer is you!

I Want To Apologize

I want to apologize to my mother whom I miss and love,
Someone I should put nothing else above,
She's forgiven me for each and every mistake,
And still it is her heart I continue to break,
Through it all she's always been there,
Helping me with all the problems I bear.
Leaving her home sad and alone,
Running away thinking I'm grown.
Although I've treated her hella whack,
To this day she has my back,
She has shown up every court date,
Two thousand dollars she owes the state,
All because of something I did,
Acting like a dumb -ass kid,
In these last fifty days,
I've been trying to change my ways.
Dedicated to my mother, Bonnie.

-Ashley, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Ashley, this is a really sweet piece. Have you told your mother how you feel? It's a great feeling when you know someone got your back. How you gonna get your mother's back. Changing is a good start, what kind of changes are you going to make?

When Were All Locked Up

I was arrested one night
My mom came to visit me every night
She would bring the cell phone,
hug me and tell me what's goin' on at home.
I trusted in her; she was my cure
She told me of Jesus and I was sure
As a matter of fact, as I was in the halls,
I feel more and more pure.
I'm tired of working for Lucifer
I went to a drug program,
my mom stayed on the street
with my brother and sister,
doin' drugs, committin' crimes
But I didn't care, 'cause this family was all mine.
The day I got out my mom went in,
caught by the po po's
committin' a sin.
Part of me was happy,
part of me was sad.
Now that I think of it, I'm really glad
I'm back in the halls
Only difference is daily I'm not seein' my
moms
I stay calm, knowin' we're both safe
and she's in God's
hands
Only one left is my sister 'cause she ran
My mom is lookin'
for this family
recovery center
If anyone has faith for me and my family
can you pray?

-Lil' Kray-z GU, SF/YGC

From The Beat: Man, Brittany, it's no surprise you are having such a hard time getting out of the drug/incarceration cycle. It sounds like a family-oriented recovery is exactly what you need. How can you two motivate each other? Do you have any ideas what is at the root of your drug use? Is it just a habit, or is it more like a pattern of escape? Are there things you're consistently trying to run from? We wish you and your mom the best.

My Role Model

I was with you when you were a child
And now you're all grown
Even though we are apart
You're never alone

I went down that long and dark road
Where life get cold
You told me to stop
Because you wanted me to grow old

Now, I will be a student at Boys' Republic
Go do what I've got to do
So in the future
I can come home and see you

I'm done doing wrong things
And you will soon see
Because I don't want to end up in trouble
And have crazy things happen to me

Believe it or not
You are a role model to me
From a boy to a man
You showed me how life is supposed to be
That's why you are the closest to me

-Rock Star B4, SF/YGC

From The Beat: We don't know who you are writing to, but it sounds like you are lucky to have this person in your life. Whoever it is will be very proud that you have made the decision not to get into trouble any more. We wish others in your situation would see the light.

The Game Owes Me An Apology

The Game,
You owe me.
You let ninjas think it was okay to put a woman down
and make her feel like shhh,
Put her on the track and get her to put wheels on her
heels,
So she can pay his bills.
She loosen herself, just to make him happy,
"Cashin' me out" he says everyday,
While she turning tricks and pullin' licks,
He sits back and relax.
She in pain and he don't say anything.
He don't give a shhh,
He just want his chedda',
But now that I think about it, I knew better.
But, to all the girls out there that's trapped in the game,
Get out now before you end up in a ditch,
Leaving you all teary-eyed and shhh,
Open casket at the funeral,
She will never forget.

-Lil' Fairfax, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Damn! The game ain't nothin' nice. With all this knowledge that you got from the game, what advice would you give to someone trying to get out of it? Are you out of it? Why do you think the game is so attractive to young women? Can it be stopped? You may never get your apology, but you've received an important lesson.

Standouts

Apology

I owe my mom an apology for all the bull I put her through, and for being a pain, and for all the time she's had to pick me up from the hall. And for all the crap she has to go through. This time I'm missing it all.

I've been sitting in my cell and not having the things I would like to have. I won't have fun with my homies for a long time. All I would like to do is go home and give my mom that apology.

-David, Santa Cruz

From The Beat: Say it to her in person, when she visits. Show her this piece when it comes out. Keep checking in with yourself. Stay honest. Test your remorse. Think of whom you may have injured, in any way. When you know you mean it, when you know it's true, ask for forgiveness. And use this down time to make yourself a better person. One of the things you can do now that you may not have as much time for on the outs – is read. Read books you can really learn things from. History, literature, poetry. Read, read, and read.

Stuck In A Cell

Sitting down, staring at a freakin' wall. If you've ever done time you know just what I'm dealing with. On your bunk, counting the cracks on the ceiling, thinking about all the crap you did in the past.

In the Hall you meet all sorts of people. Everybody thinks he's bigger than the next man. On lockdown, busting down with the machine.

Making one step off the ranch bus, handcuffs and shackles fastened to your ankles. It ain't the way it used to be, homie, that's for sure. Can't work for the Hall, so you're stuck in your cell, watching your own TV, in your own little mind.

-R, Santa Cruz

From The Beat: Very impressive R. You've been holding out on us. This piece captures a mood very powerfully. You've described the life you're living so well and your description feels so accurate – we urge you to read and reread your own words. This is not the life you really want. This is depressing. Maybe your own powers of description can get you to turn the corner. Good writing. More please.

Time To Change

It's a struggle to keep up with the game
Ya gotta work hard to keep gettin' your fame
To survive you gotta travel through the wrong lane
But there's an easier way, but you gotta use your brain
You gotta stop being wild and start acting tame
Start going to school even if people say you're lame
Treat people polite so they won't think you're insane
If you follow that advice there'll be so much you can gain
Don't end up like some of us facing time in the "Y"
Waiting 'til the last minute to pray to the Lord in the sky
Quit spending all your time trying to look fly
Half the stories y'all say are a lie
Every time you get in trouble you make an alibi
But the life you choosing is like choosing to die
I went to court yesterday, they said I was crossing the line
I got lucky I didn't go to the "Y" but I'm running out of time
When they said that, it brought me to life, it was like a sign
It was because of all those group homes I chose to decline
It was my fault; I chose to commit the crime
I always stayed out there trying to sell that last nickel and dime
Reality hit me; I gotta get my shhh straight
I can't let a lifetime in jail be my fate
It's time to change!

-Toni, 150 Crew

From The Beat: You sure have a creative way to teach, but we must ask, do you practice what you preach? When you are released, can you fight the temptation to hit the streets? Can you find a way to peace so your mind power will increase? Good luck with the future, how can you make it better than your past? How can you let little things go and make the good times last?

My Thoughts

sittin' on my bed
as a lot of thoughts
run through my head
my face feels like an ocean
as tears roll down my cheeks
and it seems
everything is moving in slow motion
and my feelings start to peak
look into my eyes
and tell me what you see
observe me a lil' bit and tell me
would you like to be me
do you stay up every night like i do
pillow full of tears
puttin' up with a lil' fear
only if you knew
just put yourself in my shoes
at least one
and you'll see i'm not playin'
and not havin' fun
now put the other one on
and watch you put a frown
on your face
as you say to yourself
my life is done
although it's just begun
now tell me
would you like to be me
the one stressin'
and sittin' around tellin' everyone
you're going through depression
always getting treated like
an adolescent
mama come see you
and say stay strong
when she don't really know
what's going on
and as i sit
another thought comes to mind
do i need some time alone
to figure out where did this all go wrong
'cause i'm confused
and don't know what to do
i'm asking god
to send one of his angels
to touch me
and tell me it's just a dream
to put a smile on my face
and say it's okay
and now i awake
from my thoughts

-Tyresha, 150 Crew

From The Beat: If your mother gets to read this poem, she'll have a better idea of what's going on. But no one seems to have a magic charm to wish upon — 'cause if we did, we would wish you well. Until then, keep praying to be brushed by angels' wings; and take that time to think back on how it all began. For you'll have your chance to make it right again. You can't change the past, but with understanding you can make changes in life to make the right things last. They can't say they've been in your shoes, but more than a few Beat readers feel you.

To See His Face

dedicated to Cameron
i woke up this morning
with a frown on my face
i woke up this morning
thinking my time was gonna be erased
i woke up this morning
thinking this shhh was gonna end
i woke up this morning
thinking i would be next to my best friend
as i wake up every morning
i feel as if i am in a cage
a roaring lion with so much rage
you will never realize how much
shhh happens in my one day
'cause people like to hate
yeah y'all can relate
as i wanna wake up every morning
to see my baby's sweet face
i realize how much i love him
and want to just wake up and see his face
he has been in my daily thoughts
and his memory will never be erased
he is my motivation in my daily life
and no one will ever be able
to embrace me like he does
no one will ever be able
to show me so much love
i dedicate this one
to the one i love
my boo cameron
i want to wake up every morning
next to your beautiful face
i realize how i want to put
our d n a together and make
our son lil' sokoe
for him i would thank god
to awake another day
just to let you know
i will never forget you
and will always be true
for you are my one and only boo
to you i dedicate my life
for i'm your one and only wife
you give me a reason to even write
for you i'd put my life on the line
i woke up this morning
thinking about how to write this
for i cannot get enough
of my baby boy's sweet kisses
i love you and for you
i will wake up every morning

-Barbara, 150 Crew

From The Beat: You took our recent topic, "I Woke Up This Morning ...", and created a lover's lament, cut off from the object of your joy. Yet your poem is also paean of hope, of dedication and motivation to wake and face another day of pain because one day you will be free to see your lover's face again. Yes, our readers can relate when you write of those who hate, but they can feel you as well, when on memories of love you dwell. Thanks for writing for him, and for readers of The Beat Within.

My Apology

I owe my mom a apology because she told me to go to school and stop hanging around with them gangbangers. She always told me that I wasn't going to learn nothing on the streets but how to get locked up or get killed and I never used to listen. But now I'm locked up for not listening to my parents and always wanting to be known for putting in work for the block.

Using and abusing females was all I knew until I realized I would kill if somebody did what I did to females to my sisters or my mom. My mom is still by my side after all this and is still supporting me. And if I would have of just listened to my mom, I would not be in this kind of situation going to CYA. I would have been home going to school.

-Lil' Lc, 150 Crew

From The Beat: It's crazy when we check ourselves about the things we do that we wouldn't want done to us or those we love. Do you now treat others the way you want to be treated? When you get out of CYA, how can you make a better life/future for yourself?

Apology

There is a lot of people I owe an apology to. Like to start off and most important is God for living such a sinful life and not living for Jesus, and doing his good deeds by trying to follow his footsteps the best I could possibly do.

Another person is my mother and father for letting them down by getting into trouble like this so it is keeping me away from them and also I ain't there to watch over them and take care of them.

So I really owe a lot of people an apology, yet it seems like no one owes me an apology. Although I really don't want apologies and sorries, all I want is to know God more and live my life for him, also to be with my son and family to make up for lost time and to love and take care of them.

-I Apologize, 150 Crew

From The Beat: It's never too late to make up for the past. You still have time to make amends with God and he is a forgiving God. How can you make up for lost time with your parents? When you are released, how can you be a part of your son's life?

Disturbing Mental Images

I personally really don't care about all that stuff that's going on. Lately, I really don't follow the news. I see both points of view.

My disturbing images are all self-imposed stuff that I did to myself that I can't get out of my mind, that drive me to failure and drive me crazy until I get relief from my most loved enemy... meth.

-Philly, Marin

From The Beat: Do you think it's possible that if you got involved in what's going on in your neighborhood, community, city and learned what your country is up to in the world, that the dynamics of your life would turn from meth outward toward the rest of the world? Could it be that the more obsessed with meth you get, the greater the hold meth gets on you? What else besides meth do you care about? How are you doing in Juvy without it? Do you think having to go without it in Juvy will help you stay away from it on the outs? If not, what would help you?

Apology To My Mom

I owe an apology to my mom for keep coming in here because every time I come here she has to pay and she can't see her son when she wants. Also for not listening to her when I was on the outs and for running away because I know she worried about me 'cause she didn't know if I had food to eat or if I was even alive.

I have told my mom sorry for these things but I still feel guilty and bad for those things because that is not the way you should treat your mother.

-Josh, 150 Crew

From The Beat: It's okay to feel guilty and bad for things that you've done in the past, but how about you promise yourself and your mother (and mean it) that you'll never come back to the Hall. What can you do to make your mother proud?

Standouts

Wishing

i wished i prayed
and asked god for his forgiveness
while in my head
i was really wishing
for something i was missing
and about how i never
took the time to listen
to anybody
not even my mommie
and now i'm suffering
the consequences
and reminiscing
about the time that
i could have had
now i'm feeling sad
'cause i know
my mom is mad at me
thinking about her little girl
in the open world
but that's what i get
for wishing
[to be continued]

-Laqulisha, 150 Crew

From The Beat: They say you should be careful what you pray for, because you just might get it. So pray for God to give you what you need to succeed in life: the ability to listen, make good decisions, and do right. Then you'll make your mother proud you found the light. Thanks for a poem full of wisdom and insight.

my mom is mad at me

My Life With My Bros And Dad

Well what's up homeboys! This the homie Green Eyes from them Hayward streets about to shoot you a little bit about my life.

Well as you know I grow up in them Hayward streets. I lived in some apartments with my bros, mom, dad, but pops was always in and out the pen so basically me and my two bros were some bad ass little kids. Where we live there was some other little kid that all way used to bite so one day he was playing on a tire swing in out apartment so me, my bros Goo Goo and Speedy got three things. (We were about 5,6,7) I had a plastic bat my bro Goo Goo had a belt and my bro speedy had a stick 'cause that kid always used to bite so we went out there. He was spinning on the swing and we started to hit him hella times. After that we cut and hid in the house.

A couple months later my dad got out the pen. Then we moved like a month later to a house. Then we all went to "harder school" in Hayward. Me and my bro Goo Goo always used to get in fights at that school. When I was on my way home from school, I seen hella police cars in front of my house then, I thought to myself, "what the hell did me and my bro do now?" But it was for my dad because I guess he had a parole violation so he went back to the pen.

But after that, I started to cut school to run out with clothes from stores with my folks. Then after that we all started to come to jail for stolos and robberies and shhh and I am still comin' back to this fake ass jail. But the whole point is that if I really think about it my family was only all together a couple times, either I was in jail, or one of my bros or my dad was! But we all hella close. One thing I love about my dad is that he always was a hustler! Even till his day he's still ballin' on dubs and shhh! But he on the run again! I got much love for my dad and bros though no matter what they do because we all been through a lot of shhh! Drinkin' with the homies, pops will pull up with hella brew and drink for a little while — then cut! The homies at Camp knew what's up "pops" just an OG livin' it up, still in the game. Me and my bros just live the life that was given to us in this game of straight hustlas, ballers, shot callers, killas, and gangsters that won't stop till they casket drop.

As for me and my bros, we grew up with nothing but struggle and strife in our life! It's why I got so much anger in my life!

-Green Eyes, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Nice writing. Do you regret anything that you have done in the past? If your father raised you differently, do you think that you would have turned out differently? What is your best memory with your dad? How can you make your future better than your past? If you could rewind the hands of time, how would you do things differently?

Wrong Direction

Ever since I was young I've been movin' at a fast pace in the wrong direction. My mom told me that I was a smart person and that I was movin' in the right direction because I was acting like I was going to school.

She would come home from work and the phone ring and she would ask me who was that on the phone and I would say somebody playin' on the phone but all along it was the school callin' to let her know that I missed school again, being stupid following the next ninja foot step in the wrong direction, leadin' me to trouble and to lose what me and my mom had together. So what I'm tryin' to say is I'm sorry.

-Lil' Molly, 150 Crew

From The Beat: We know you love your mother very much and that you regret the fact that you put her through hella stuff, but remember, you are young and you still have along future ahead of you. Instead of letting your regrets eat you up inside, make it up to her. Vow to yourself that she will be a priority in your life. You wanna be there for your mother — be there!

I Woke Up This Morning

I woke up this morning and...
Thought only 7 more days in here
I woke up this morning and...
Thought about how to live a better life
I woke up this morning and...
Chose to have a good day
I woke up this morning and...
Thought of my family
That's what I did when I woke up this morning

-Josh, 150 Crew

From The Beat: We love your positive attitude towards everything. How do you make the best of your days in the Hall? What advice would you give to someone with a negative attitude?

I missed school again, being stupid following the next ninja foot step in the wrong direction

Changing Places

This place was strange
I was living on
A missile range
The sand there
Was the color of snow
Weird!
I was used to seeing
Black ugly crows
Tumbleweeds would cross my path
At the same time
I was struggling in math
Missiles the size of a house
Suddenly, I wasn't thinking about
Looking up this blonde lady's blouse
Two months ago
I was swinging on swings
Wondering if the sky
Touched the top of the trees
Spinning on a merry-go-round
That you had to push by yourself
Watching softball players
As they would strike-out
Now all I was able to see
Was MPs
Wearing brown, beige and green
You could fry an egg on the sidewalk
It was scorching hot
And the heat
Just wouldn't stop
The Bay Area is where I was from
I grew up and lived
In the fog
Going to the Commissary
Everything seemed like
It only cost a penny
Everyone always seemed
So very friendly
Eating Mr. Peanut
With the chocolate inside
But the irritating heat
Just wouldn't subside
My old town was known
For the Golden Gate Bridge
Now, as soon as you enter this place
You see thirty-foot explosives
From raccoons, opossums and bridges
To coyotes, jack rabbits and monstrous explosives
Man, this place was really exhaustive
I was in third grade
My friends and I
Loved to roller blade
Back then Goosebumps were cool
Now, at my age, if you read them
You're only a fool
I learned what "horny" means
I thought beans
Were horribly disgusting
Everyone rode bikes
Because skateboarding
Just wasn't so liked
In our neighbor's yard
There was a brown and black dog
He was a German Shepard
And his name was "Wiley"
He grew as if
He was on steroids
It snowed there one day
It was a beautiful sight
Now I'd just say
"It was tight!"
There was also a rottweiler
Who would go for walks in the rain
I wish I could remember her name
She was stronger than an ox
And as quick and agile as a fox
We got a dog of our own
We named him "Tahoe"
He's a chocolate lab mix
And, unfortunately for him
He now is fixed
He won't chase a stick
But will chase a ball
If you throw one for him
He loves to swim
But if he has food or a treat
Don't go near him
That's my final warning
My step-dad was in the military
And was stationed on a base
Where it was impossible to grow berries
From his duties
My step-dad was relieved
We packed up our stuff
And headed in the direction
Opposite of East
California
The state of my hometown
And my birthplace
That's where
I wanted to be
"The Golden State"
Born and raised
Man, was I glad
To be back in this place
The cold damp weather
Warmed my heart
Like never before
Back to the bridge
And away from the explosives
No more MPs
Just beautiful trees
With lush green leaves
No more blazing hot sun
Going back to the way
I used to have fun
No more coyotes
Just going swimming
And watching my little brother
With his little orange floaties
Along with being in "the city"
I was closer to all my old friends
And most of all
My family
No more tumbleweeds
Just my grandma's
Homemade cuisine
My mom got her job back
And finally in this place I love
I am able to sit and relax
Then we moved to Marin
And for the past seven years
This is where we've been
Now I sit in my cell
Currently stuck
In Juvenile Hell
I may be in here
Until I'm eighteen
Unless I am able
To pass my GED
But until that day
Here I stay
Until I am released
And able to fly away
I have to earn my wings
So I can be outside and listening
To the beautiful sound
Of the birds, bees and all that surrounds me
Out of Marin
In San Francisco
Is where I'll be
Plenty of people
To help me succeed
So many opportunities
For me to seize
I'm out
Peace!!!

-Tim, Marin

***From The Beat:** Nice recollections of your childhood. How did you feel about your step-dad getting discharged? How do you feel about the wars the US is involved with now? Why were you used to seeing crows? Do you enjoy living in Marin? Why or why not? Do you miss your dog? Do you think that if you still love "Goosebumps," you'd be a fool not to read them?*

Until I am released
And able to fly away, I have to earn my wings

How I Came Here

So what up Beat? Yeah, well I went to court on the 20th and they gave me another pretrial on the 28th. Well forget all that. Yeah, well I don't really know what to write so I'm a just write what I like reading the best, which is when folks be writin' about their experiences. So the experience I'm a share wit' you is how I came here.

Well it was a nice-ass mornin'. I woke up to the sun hitting my face. Since I was on the run for a few months I decided to just keep coo' and chill at the crib. About twelve noon I received the call to this day I dread. It was "my boy." He was like "Yeah, what up Dave?" I told him to hit me back, I'm about to take my sisters to the park. He was like "Naw, there's a big ol' party about to crack. The guirl that throwing the party said 'bring yo' boy wit' the gold ones." So I was like, "Who the girl?" He said, "Don't trip. Just come down and meet me by the library." I was like "Aight then."

So I go to my mom's room and tell her the plans. She approves, so it's official. So we hop in the Chevy and bounce. We go a few blocks and hit a stop sign. We was choppin' it up, so we wasn't payin' attention. Then I look to my right. Damn, it's da boys! So me and moms get spooked. We was about one block from where we was supposed to be. Well, the cop knew moms from the past and knew she ain't had her L's, but she got it when she got arrested last time so he didn't know.

Well he flashes the lights and we play it coo' and pull over. Well he comes to the window and gets put on hush 'cause moms pull out the L's like whoa. So he tryin' to find something to get her. He sees no seatbelts. Well anyways, he runs my mom's name and I guess I was on as her kid on the run. So it's taking a quick minute to come back and then I see another cop roll up — then I knew it was on, so I laced up the J's and took off gold ones and chain and gave it to my mom.

Then another undercover Cutlass rolled up and my mom said that he is the inspector that came to the house looking for me. Now I'm stressin', there's already five of them. So they ask me what's my name and ask me to get out of the car. I told them okay and told them, "This door broke I got to get out that one." The reason for that is because before they came I put my elbow on the lock and rolled the window three-quarters up. I was scootin' over to the driver's seat and my mom got off and told me, "Don't Run!"

Right there the cop grabbed me through the window. I slipped out the jacket and dived out the car. I had too much to lose. I felt it ain't gonna matter no more. So I ran down the street and went straight to the first house, and while I was goin' another Explorer pulled up and some Jeff Garcia looking fool popped out and tried to tackle me, but I threw up my arms and hit him with an elbow and he ate it hella hard. Then I hit a wooden gate and then he tried to hop it also but fell on his face like a dumb ass. All I heard was "Need medical." I was rolling so hard I couldn't even hop the next fence.

Well I got back on the main street and saw about fifteen cops and narcs, and one cop car speedin' toward me. I was straight spooked and I wanted to give up. The thing that gave me hope was the fact that I was about to go to an area that I knew like a book. Well I ran in some apartments and up one floor then came out the glass doors where you usually press buttons to call them down. Then I ran across the street to the back of a Chinese food restaurant and there was hella fire in pans flipping and shhh.

After that I lost the cops all the way in confusion. I made it another half mile down to the gym where I called my boy to pick me up. As soon as he pulled up a cop pulled up too, and I ran again and later got dipped and put on blast with gunpoint arrest.

Yeah, that's about it probably. Yeah. The crazy thing is I made Daly City newspaper with the headlines "15 Year Old Makes Mockery of Daly City Police Department." Well I'm payin' now — I got the Y facing me so it was kinda not worth it. That's all folks.

-Jacob The Jeweler, San Mateo

From The Beat: Man, this is an amazing story, especially given that it all started out so innocently and ended with such serious consequences. All that's missing is the theme music for the movie-like quality to be complete. The trip is that the lesson in all of this, which we know you feel, is in the very last sentence of the piece. We understand the urge you had to run, and we're not sayin' that the same thought wouldn't have crossed our minds, but the reality of the circumstance was always looming, and you certainly didn't do anything to endear yourself to your PO or judge by taking off. Did you really think you'd get away — not just that day, but for all the times cops would be looking for you? The only think we're unclear about is whether you were facing Y time before this escapade, or if you're headed to the Y because you ran. It was kinda not worth it? In our opinion, if running lead to the Y, it was completely not worth it.

Woke Up

I woke up this morning with a frown on my face
couldn't wait to eat off my breakfast plate
hoping it was some kind of meat
so then I had five minutes to brush my teeth
and tasted the toothpaste and it was kind of sweet
so I started to dance and move my feet
so the staff started to smile but I didn't care
so I started to wild-out
I only had two more minutes
I felt hype like Popeye when he eats his spinach
so said "Hey staff, you counting down too fast"
but he said "Shut up before I tax yo' ass"
so then I started to brush fast and faster
and thought in my head this foo' thinks he's my master
but for some reason I wasn't even mad
but I was glad for new day
ta pray even though this place
I have to stay
but hey there's another way
to play the game that I play
and not trip about those shady staff
or ones who rush time
because now I'm in my prime
and when I get out I'm a shine
like a brand new dime
so yeah this morning was cool I guess
and I ate up all the food on my plate
so hey, today is a good day!

-Ju-Nut, San Mateo

From The Beat: This is a tight, creative flow that goes back and forth between the serious and the playful. How are you going to get your shine on when you get back out? How are you able to keep your head up and recognize the positive in each day — or at least today — despite the time you're doing? What tools have you picked up in the Hall that are going to help you in your quest to stay free back on the outs?

Outraged

I woke up this morning and felt outraged because I'm still here. Every day feels longer and longer: the same four walls, the same routine, the same food. I'm getting sick of it.

I'm upset, because the system says you're innocent until proven guilty, but I've been here for two and a half months for something I didn't do, but the law has other plans. I'm just tired of being incarcerated — it's taking away from my youth, but since I've been here I've had a lot of time to think and look at my life and get my priorities straight, but I'm making the best of it, and I know soon I can return.

-Lim, San Mateo

From The Beat: You bring up an interesting apparent contradiction in the stated purpose of the law — that you're innocent until proven guilty — and the reality of your situation — that you're incarcerated in the Hall until found innocent. What would you suggest as a solution? Do you believe that every youth charged with a crime should be free until found guilty?

These Days

Disturbing images flowing through my head,
another victim fallin' to the streets, dead.
Images being portrayed on TV
Heads being chopped off,
how do you believe what you see?
Turf wars in Cali, turf wars in the Middle East
Victims being killed in both, to say the least
Bombs over Baghdad, terrorists on the creep
Siren alerts going off when youngins tryin' to sleep
These are the times we live in
But we can change it, ain't too late to begin

-Peanut Head, San Mateo

From The Beat: You're right that it's never too late to try to change things. But things have gotten so out of control, we wonder where to begin. It's hard enough changing yourself, so we guess that's the place to focus your energy on.

when I died I came back as myself and with the intention of good but all I do is evil

Images

I have seen many bad images that I wish I could erase, like watching my little sister die at birth. She was very premature and weighed 1lb 3oz. But I have learned to accept the fact that she is gone. I miss my little sister. She died instantly at birth. I love you, Aleisha. RIP, Sister.

-Roderick, San Mateo

From The Beat: The premature birth and death of your little sister is a tragedy, but at least it's a natural tragedy. All we can add to your very touching tribute to Aleisha is that she lives in your heart, and will do so as long as you live.

I Remember When . . .

I remember the old days when I used to play outside
I remember when I used to run and hide
From the monsters . . . but now from myself
Nowadays I depend on everyone else

I remember when we used to go on vacations
Because we don't anymore,
I run for fun and stay on probation
I remember when I didn't care about boys
But now I can't go on without them by my side

I remember when I used to cry because I was hurt
Now I cry because all the pain I have endured

I remember when I couldn't wait to be older
Now I just wish I could be younger
I used to be fearless
But now I'm scared shhhless.

-Ginger, San Mateo

From The Beat: This piece is nothing if not honest – not only longing for the old days but unflinching in stating how your release from the Hall isn't a purely happy moment. What is it that you're scared of? It's common for people, no matter how successful or happy, to wish to live like they did when they were children. However, it is inevitable that we all grow up, and while there's nothing wrong with wishing to be young, it is important to confront the reality of the responsibilities facing you. What will it take to begin to heal the pain you feel? What will it take to stop running and face yourself?

Reincarnation

First off I do believe in reincarnation, and I think it's something everyone should believe in because once you die you might want to come back and watch over someone or try to help change what's wrong in the world. I believe in it because when my grandmother was dying her last words were I'll be back, and after that a white cat showed up on my front porch and wouldn't leave. But as time went on I never would get in any trouble until the cat died, then all the trouble started.

Now once I die I want to be reincarnated and come back as a dove. A lot of people want to come back as a bird so they can fly around; not me, I would want to be a dove because my mom likes them and I would be able to watch over my family everywhere they went and I'll be their guardian angel. Now don't get me wrong — flying would be cool — but that's not what it's about. I think it's about being able to live again.

Lastly I do believe I've already been reincarnated and came back as myself, but how I see it is when I was here before when I was I had the intention of doing sin but all I was kept doing was good, so when I died I came back as myself and with the intention of good but all I do is evil until my time comes again and determines if I should be reincarnated by what was done before I died. So therefore, this concludes my essay on reincarnation.

-Youn1, San Mateo

From The Beat: This is an interesting piece, and a unique take on reincarnation. There is almost a Buddhist angle to what you say, where what you are in your next life is determined by how you have acted in your previous life. Yet for you, it seems that the highest form of reincarnation would be that of a dove, whereas for the Buddhist, it is to transcend being human by achieving enlightenment. How do you think the form you'll take in the next life will be chosen? Will you be allowed to influence what you'll return as? Who or what will make that decision? Returning to this life for a second, how can you turn your intentions of doing good into good actions? What will it take to make sure what you do reflects your goal of being a good person?

Standouts

Early This Morning

I woke up this morning and
realized the sun had just rised
but there was too much on my mind
to close my eyes
I kept thinking only 19 more days
then I can leave the Hall
and go my own way
but which way will I go?
Will I run
or walk slow?
Be absorbed in my problems
or let it flow?
To be honest I don't know
College seems so far away
I guess I'll have to take this commitment
day by day
I can't fall back into the
traps in the streets
stop living in the mentality
that "I've got to hustle to eat"
it's a cycle that will leave me
six feet deep
so I'm overwhelmed and once again I fall asleep.

-Broken Glass, San Mateo

From The Beat: The series of questions you ask in the middle of this piece are the crux around which much of what will happen — both immediately and over time — will play out. Taking it day by day is a solid start; there's so much to consider, so much that will be coming at you, that trying to anticipate it all and take it all on at once can be overwhelming. However, make sure you look up from the immediate once in a while — glance off in the distance and see if the decisions you're making are keeping you heading in a direction that you're glad to be pursuing. And when you feel overwhelmed, or if you slip, step back up and push on through, one decision, one action at a time.

Liking It Here

Hey what's up Beat? How is y'all doin? Me, I'm doin' coo. Just bored in my room right now, so I decided to let y'all know something.

It's kinda weird how I'm startin' to like this piece more and more as the days just fly by. It doesn't really bother me being in here. It's startin to become like home. I guess I like it here is because it gives me a chance to think of what I could be doing on the outs. I would probably get in trouble a lot.

I really don't know why I'm startin' to like it here. I don't know if it's because of the workouts, LMA, or if it's that I am sober.

Don't get me wrong. I rather be on the outs chillin' wit' all the homies. One thing that I like is that you can kinda get to know tha real me in here. 'Cause on the outs I was always the one blasted or drunk. But now I'm sober. It feels good to be sober, but I miss tha other stuff.

I don't know if I'ma change to my old self, or if I'ma stay clean. I wanna stay clean, but too many temptations. I'ma try to change and not get locked up and stay sober. But don't count on it. No promises here 'cause this ain't tha outs and there ain't any temptations here!

So till next time, keep ya heads up and I'm out.

-Funk-E, San Mateo

From The Beat: We applaud you for keeping it real. We hope that your growing comfort in the Hall doesn't reflect an institutional comfort, but comes instead from the insights you are having regarding your life, your sobriety, and what you will be facing on the outs. Frankly, we think your uncertainty about how you will handle the inevitable temptations you will face is a sign of maturity and growth. We don't know what you will do, either, but the fact that you are aware of the dangers makes us hope that you will do what you have to do to stay out of places like this, so that you don't grow too complacent and comfortable as a prisoner.

Apologize

If I had to apologize to someone, I'd have to apologize to myself. I did so much, and all along I've been hurting no one but myself.

I look back at old pictures of myself as a toddler, and ask did I fail him. When I was six years old I would have never thought I would be here at YGC.

-Mark B5, SF/YGC

From The Beat: What do you think you should have done so that you wouldn't owe that toddler that was you an apology? Can a child fail himself in upbringing? Isn't the definition of a child one who needs the guidance and support of caring adults? It sounds to us that someone else failed you. But recognizing that failure doesn't change reality, so what will you do from this point on in order not to fail yourself in the future?

I Woke Up

I woke up this morning and I felt blessed because I'm alive. Even though I'm in juvenile, I try to make the best of it. Every day is the same routine, but you have to try to learn new things.

I get through my time by reading books I can learn from, not bs. I read things like that to make me understand things about myself, and why I act the way I do.

While I'm here I'm tryin' to learn from my mistakes. Well, that's all I have. I'm out.

-Diddy B5, SF/YGC

From The Beat: What books do you like reading? What kind of things have you learned while making the most of your time? We admire your positive attitude because we know a person's attitude can color every experience he has. If you look for positive outcomes, chances are you will find positive outcomes. We're pulling for you.

To My Grandma

My apology to my grandma for all the shhh I put her through. Not knowing, but I did and I would tell her that the shhh I did wasn't 'cause of her, it's because I wanted to do what I wanna do, not thinking I took actions and messed up my life when I came to YGC. And ever since then, ain't nothing been the same between me and you.

Grandma, I ran away just to prove a point, but what point did I prove? Beats me, and now look where I'm at, YGC again for the fifth time, wasting my life sitting here seeing the same faces, eating the same nasty food.

For what? All because I didn't want to follow simple-ass rules and now I want to say I apologize to the ones I hurt, especially my grandma. It hurts me when you're hurt, and I don't want you to hurt no more, so I'm going to do what I gotta do to get home to my grandma and live my life and to prove all the haters who said I couldn't make it, I'm going to prove them wrong forever. And always, "I love you, grandma." This is dedicated to my one and only loved one, my grandma.

-Toya GU, SF/YGC

From The Beat: Good writing and good thinking, Toya. What do you think it's going to take for you to remember you'd rather follow the rules that will keep you on the outs instead of locked in the Hall? What temptations will you need to avoid?

Repenting

Dear Mr. Bellazane,

I just want to apologize for almost taking something dear from you. I don't want to be messy, so I'm not going to say what it was.

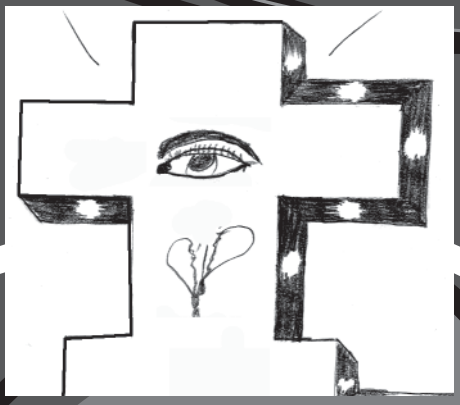
If you ever read this, I want to give you my sincere apology. Any other time I would have done it, but I think God wouldn't let me, 'cause when it came to it, God wouldn't let me.

The only reason why I did what I did after that was because I let my ego get in the way. Don't take it personal. It was strictly business.

I felt that writing down on paper helps to cleanse my soul. In the meantime, everybody don't need to know the details, but that I'm very sorry for what I did. Enough said.

-Afro B4, SF/YGC

From The Beat: Since we don't know what you are referring to, we can only admire your decision to say you're sorry from a distance. Whatever you did (and we've all done things we regret), we hope your apology helps to get it off your chest and soul. Where is Mr. Bellazane now? Do you think if he read your letter he would forgive you?



I'm Sorry

I can say I owe an apology to my mother, because I have gave her a lot of problems. All the time I was on the block all night hustlin', "Pierda Cocaina."

All the times I came home drunk and high. All the times I gave her hard times because I would have fight after fight at school.

I apologize, "Madre Mia." I never meant to break your heart.. I would like to say my apology to my brother for not being there now that he needs a big bra, and to lil' Sis, and my older cousin. I'm sorry to my girl because of all the times I made her cry.

I apologize a trillion times.

-Juicy Loo B5, SF/YGC

From The Beat: A trillion apologies may be going overboard a bit, but to say your sorry to your mom, and all the rest, for putting your own desires above theirs is a very good thing to do. We hope your mother knows how you feel, and that you will remember how you feel when you are free to make your own decisions again.

I really owe an apology to all my loved ones, because they all are affected by me being locked down.

My Life Is Real

The life that I live
Is the life that I chose
Because it was the only life
That I knew

Why was I so ignorant
And thought I was so strong
Is it because I lacked respect
And couldn't hold on

Why do I feel
That reality is not so real
But yet still
I'm sitting right here

Why did I live
Just for the moment
But even then
I still wasn't focused

I got tired of living
The life that I did
But now I'm focused
I'm no longer a kid
'Cause my life is real

-Rock Star B4, SF/YGC

From The Beat: What do you think is most responsible for your newfound focus? Is it just that you are growing up, or has something happened to make you think in a new way?

I Will Be All Right

i woke up this morning
to smell the scent of life
i woke up this morning
knowing that i will be all right
i woke up frightened of life itself
but wait — life will be all right
i woke up expecting to see
my baby being born in a couple of months
i woke up frightened and scared of lust
i woke up to a job and a beautiful but hard life
i woke up knowing that oakland will reunite

-Telefaro, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Things are hard but going right for you. That's why it's hard not to be scared, too. In the past, success did not last long enough to fill you with trust, either in the world or in yourself. Yet we know you do your best, and you will pass the test of time — to wake up 'most everyday feeling fine!

Sorry, Dad And Mom

There's a few people that I owe a apology to. One is my father. I think I owe him because he is the one who has to come up in here to see me, well, one of the few people that do come up and see me. That is a part.

I feel that I owe him because coming up here is hard. Going through all that clearance at the door, taking about ten minutes just for that. Then he see me for only 45 minutes, then have to leave his son in a locked down facility till next time he feel like going through all that.

I also feel I owe my mom for having to go trough the same thing my father has to. I really owe an apology to all my loved ones, because they all are affected by me being locked down.

-Leek B5, SF/YGC

From The Beat: Why do you think your dad and mom put up with the hassle required to visit you? What kind of sacrifices do you think they've made for you all your life? What do you owe them, besides apologies? How will you give them what they want?

Standouts

Behind The Walls

These walls are hard, never showing emotion. So how am I supposed to show emotion if I'm hard?

I been locked up for about eight months. My time should be getting easier but it's not. I'm tired of these hard-ass bunks; I'm tired of some of the staff; I'm just tired of taking orders from people who ain't my parents.

This place ain't for me. I should be on the outs with my cousins just enjoying life. How can I enjoy life being locked up? That's the question.

I didn't come here to make friends or hook up with girls, but on the way I have. I'm thankful for that, but I hate it when people think they're doing me a favor. I don't ask anyone to do me any favors. I'm pretty hardheaded, and that's just the way I am.

-Kurupt, San Mateo

From The Beat: You may be hardheaded, but your writing shows that you have a head, and a good one. The things you're tired of — from the bunks to the taking orders from strangers — are what jails are all about, and they only work when you get so tired of it that you vow never to return! What we especially like about your writing, Kurupt, is that despite the legitimate complaints you make, you also find things to be thankful for. Keep your eyes on that light at the end of the tunnel, and just keep walking forward.

It's Been Five Months

So it's just about five months that I have been locked up for and I really still haven't found nothing out about my case.

It's been just about five months since I've been able to kiss or hug my future wife and that really hurts me so much.

It's been about five months since I been able to eat what I want to eat.

It's been about five months since I could take a shhh in private or when I want to take one.

It's also been about five months since I been able to really play with my daughter or been able to put her to sleep.

All these things I just mentioned, it feels like they went barehanded and ripped my heart out of me.

-Matt, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Creative use of repetition. It's been too long. We wish you could have all these things too. How have you used your time to figure things out? How will you use this remainder of time to really come up with a plan (plan A, plan B, a few support systems...)? In time you will be with your family. Use this time!

Disturbing Mental Images

The things that disturb me is how I seen pictures of how the American soldiers humiliated them people in Iraq. People should not be showing stuff like that on TV or on newspapers so most people families won't feel horrible.

I feel disturbed when I see images of what people must have been going through when they seen them two planes going straight through the Twin Towers. Do people think about all the lives that was taken when all of that madness was going on in New York, New York?

What's going on in the world today that's filled with pain? I rather be here today than see people filled with shame. What's goin' on? Ahh, what's goin' on? What's goin' on.....

-Zoomungus B5, SF/YGC

From The Beat: We wish we knew what is going on. Sometimes it seems like the whole world is going crazy, doesn't it? Which is worse, showing the pictures of the Iraqi prisoners being tortured by American soldiers, or the actual torture itself? If you were a TV newsman, would you have shown those pictures?

When Snoopy Died

What's up, Beat! This is me, Droopy, from the 150 Hall. The disturbing image that I have in my mind, is when my friend, Snoopy, died — and the last time I saw him.

I had just left from being with him at the park. Then twenty minutes later, I got a call talking about, "He got hit by a car!" Then I called his mom and she said, "Miguel's dead! Miguel's dead!" And that somewhat changed my life, too.

And then I met up with Lil' Creep and my friend Rocket, at the scene of the accident. And his go-cart and his clothes and his blood, was still on the ground!

But I'm out. I want to say, stay up to Lil' Creep; and keep yo' head and do yo' time.

-Droopy, 150 Crew

From The Beat: That is a terrible image indeed, knowing that he has died and then seeing his go-cart, his clothes and his blood, still there on the ground! With no disrespect whatsoever, we understand that he was fleeing a crime with police in pursuit when he got hit by a truck. We hope you and Creepy and Rocket, fully take in the entire chain of events that led up to that terrible image. Change your life! RIP Snoopy aka Miguel.

I See

Sweet dreams, ZZZ, a ninja's free,
walk outside and smell the fresh scent of trees.
Wind blowing in face, seein' my peeps
early morning walking up the streets
I'm so excited, throw on my Force's, some sweats and a white T
I was eager to hit the streets
I didn't even bother to brush my teeth
Running through the wind, wild, so happy to be free
Say what's up to all the homies
And they was like, "What's up? Burn one for me."
I was like, "I'm cool," and started runnin' the streets
Stop at a pay phone and I'm thinkin' 'bout my wifey
Hit her up and told her I'm out
She said in about a half hour she would meet me at my housey
The breeze feels good, so I walk back up the block
I post up for a minute saying,
"Whass up? Hi. Good-bye."
But out last night an' tellin' stories
I say time's up, got to head to the crib to see what's up with my chick
French kissin', huggin' and feelin'
Saying I miss you, and all the "I love yous"
Head up to the room, started to get freaky
All I hear is knocking... Shhh!
"Time fo' shower." Damn!
Another day at YGC
Disturbing mental images?
This what be teasing me...

-Jd B5, SF/YGC

From The Beat: What a sweet dream you were having before that rude awakening! Now, will you be able to see this dream come true, and do what you have to do so that when you are free once more, you will never be awakened this way again?

The System Is Playing Us

The system is playing me because I am locked up and can't go out where I want to and when I want to. The system is not fair because it got other people in charge of your life. It got other people telling you what to do.

The system hurts youngsters because you're locked up away from your family with a whole lot of people you don't know that probably don't even care about you. And it's not a good place to be 'cause you might come doing worse things than what you did before.

The system is racist because you don't know how much time you're going to get. You don't know where they might send you. And you might have kids and if you get a lot of time your kids will grow up without you. That's why the system is racist.

The system makes money off of us because if your mother and father make too much money they make your parents pay for you to stay at a good place like Natural Bridge and the state pay for you. That's how the system makes money off of us.

They system is corrupt because the people that were there can lie on you and say you did something and you will get blamed for it or you might even get an extra charge and more time.

-Twin, Virginia

From The Beat: Thank you for your opinions. In some ways, getting locked up is a quick fix with big consequences for everyone (i.e. a child growing up without his/her father.) All that you have written has some truth to it. Use this to motivate you to not get mixed up with the system anymore. Remember that you are partly responsible and now that you are a young adult, you are almost fully responsible for yourself and actions. You can only change yourself right now. Later when you figure your stuff out, you can help make some changes in the system.

Images Of Death, RIP Roneez And Kenny

I've seen a lot of disturbing images in my lifetime. The most recent disturbing image that I went through was when I saw one of my close patnas in the hospital on I.C.U. He got shot four times, twice in the head and two to the body. He got shot because he hit for 550 in a dice game.

His head was three times the size of my head. He was one of my close friends. I was in the hospital when his mom decided to pull the cord. It was one of the worse days of my life, just watching someone who I grew up with die right in my face.

The doctor said that he would've been able to make it, but he would be like a vegetable. But knowing my patna, he was all about his money, so I feel that my patna is in a better place now.

I had another close friend who was like an older brother to me. We blew so much purple before he died. He got shot as he was walking out of the corner store.

It's hard to lose close friends, but that makes me stronger as a person.

The worse loss I had to go through was when I loss my uncle in April 6, 2003.

RIP Roneez & Kenny.

-Anonymous Man, 150 Crew

From The Beat: We remember Kenny too... It's so sad that so many people get murdered. Other than being stronger, did you learn something from your losses about how you want to live? Is revenge really fair or does it just add to the sadness and continue violence? Just some things to reflect on. If you can one day, tell us or someone about your hardest loss, your uncle. Our deepest condolences.

I Be Thinking

Well, I woke up this morning and...
I was thinking about my life and wondering about everything that's happening on the outs right now!
Thinking about what my friends and family are doing without me.
I'm missing out on a lot of money 'cause I could be out on the block hustling.
I think about getting shot by enemies, but I don't worry about it because I don't have fear in my heart.
I think God sent me here for a reason because people on the outs are looking for my head.
I think God is doing this for all the things I've done in the past.
Well God is doing this for my sins.
And he don't want me to be out there because I would of done something bad and that's the end.

-Augie, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Thank you for opening up your mind to The Beat. We hope you continue to express yourself and think more like you do here. It can prevent a lot of heartache. Sounds like you got people after you and you are safer inside. Money is nothing in the end. We wish you can just get up and leave all this. Is that possible? It is possible to stop all this from getting any further. How is the question to ponder.

I Woke Up This Morning And...

I woke up this morning and I thought about the women I hit, and wonder how she feel. I know she probably is afraid to even walk alone at night now. Because of me, the person that changed her life.

I want to give her the right apology she needs, and tell her that I am so sorry for what I did to her. I wish I could tell her how sorry I am for what I did.

-Dayneisha, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Dayneisha, it takes someone with a strong sense of compassion to reflect on a situation from a perspective other than your own. When you regret something you've done, the lesson is learned. Even if your apology never reaches this person, you can redeem yourself by your future actions.

No Feeling For Televised Images

This is Payaso coming from the 150 Hall, and just writing about this topic on images of death and violence on television.

You know what? I don't really have any feelings about those images, because all these Americans supposedly so upset by these televised images — didn't show any feelings at all about my homies when they died! So why should I cry for strangers who die on TV?

-Lil' Payaso, 150 Crew

From The Beat: The pages of The Beat are full of verbal tears (and images) cried for all homies who've died on both sides of your senseless civil war, and for all the mothers who moan, "What for?" Every violent death diminishes us all. But it's your call.

I think God sent me here for a reason

Standouts

God I Need Some Help

God, I need some help 'cause I don't know where I'm going,
can't see the way, no one's there.
God, I need some help 'cause my faith is almost gone.
Is God out there looking over me, does he still love me, am I still his son?
Does he still know my name?
God, I need some help 'cause my life is getting crazy,
Dreams let me know I'm not going to be here long.
God, I'm crying out to save me from myself
'cause I'd die without knowing you.
God, I need some help.

-D-Moe, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Why don't you think you will be here long? This plea for help can be heard loud and clear. Now it's your turn to listen carefully for the answers and do something with those answers. You have a lot of pressure on you from both sides. Listen to your heart. God is always within you.

My Apology

I owe my sister an apology
For giving me a place to stay,
And in my own way.
I gave it away.
And while I was there,
Damn, I can't even bare
To tell you what I did,
But I gotta let it be
So I can give her, her apology
I would smoke in her house,
When she told me not to
Damn, I was a foo'
I should of never blew
But still I was more of a foo'
And by getting caught at school
With some of that purple
Damn, I didn't mean to hurt her,
But it made her look bad
And made her feel sad
Oh ,but I can't forget the drinking
Damn, what was I thinking?
Drinking in front of the neighbors
Damn I'm sorry,
I'm sorry and I love you
For being there,
And for showing me you really care.

-Valentino, 150 Crew

From The Beat: This is a beautiful apology. Now that you are sober and locked away from loved ones, you see what you were taking for granted and how lucky you were. Yeah, life isn't perfect and it sounded like you may have been escaping through drugs but you do have a lot to be thankful of. We see this as an apology and a thank you letter. We hope she gets it and we hope you follow through and get your life together, for you and for your loved ones.

Woke Up This Morning

I woke up this morning out of a dream
Sober like Yoda coming out of a fiend.
Thought I was really getting over out on the streets
Now I just want to get over with this dream,
I mean my nightmare, it's way more then a light scare,
Might flare out, do something stupid, stay right there
My conscience stay tellin' me they want me to pray
but how it rage' hell in me
I thought satan was just misunderstood
But found out he blatant and heart is stiff as wood
We use' to be buddies but now he won't leave
Yellin' c'mon, I be like, "naw cuz," but he stay followin' me
So he hides now usin' other people's bodies
But my funeral gon' be packed like John Gotti's
Death is for sure so I'm tryna get ready
So we can throw around hundreds like confetti
Hopefully when I tap the gate, g-o-d ain't forgot about me
Right not though I'ma live long as he let me

-Dolla Deesa, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Don't you know that you will live as long as you try to live. It's called free will. So when this nightmare is over, are you going to go right back out on those streets and stay asleep in this nightmare? Or are you going to finally wake up?

I Woke Up This Morning And...

I woke up this morning and I was behind these walls again,
doing the same old shhh I do everyday.
I get up and wash up and go back to my room till breakfast.
Then after breakfast I go to school
and just think about the outs
wonder what my homies are doing?
Probably the same old shhh we do everyday
-smokin' weed, and getting drunk off beer,
and I'm just in here
doing the same old shhh
I do everyday when I wake up in the morning, Nothing!

-Twin, 150 Crew

From The Beat: You mentioned doing some reading too. Try to fill your mind with knowledge, higher reading skills and wisdom while locked up. You have so much potential Twin, don't throw it all away, 'cause you still have a chance to do more than just represent the hood. We see it in you!

Left Her For the Hall

my girlfriend is the love of my life
and i left her to come to the hall
i know that it was wrong
but i believe i could have stopped myself
from doing what i did to that person
but to me it felt like i needed to do it
now i feel so bad for doing that
i wish i didn't do it at all
now i'm stuck up in the hall for a month
and it really sucks
i don't want to be away from my girl any longer
and i'm terribly sorry for what i did to her
i do hope she forgives me
so i could get back together with her
and everything could be cool again
i really miss her
i'm not the type to just use girls
for sex or money
i want my relationship back
i love her

-Tagaloa, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Some of these "rules" you learn from the street or from friends or wherever, will have you doing things that are wrong because you've heard (and maybe said) so often it's the thing to do — then you find out later it's not what you want at all, 'cause now you're at the other end of the chain of events and you can see better. Whether she forgives you or not, live and learn, 'cause you don't need another turn in here to think about it.

Visualize Homicides

close your eyes
and visualize homicides
disturbing mental images of death
poisoning my mind
distributing rage from pain
all onto another page
floating with deep emotion
elopin' with happiness i'm hopin'
to fly once again
trapped in eternal damnation
because of my sin
so where do i begin
on my never-ending journey to win
here we go once again
see the devil in my dreams
telling me to sign this deed
than an angel appears
and says no stop please
as a shot goes off
the devil drops
to his knees
i sit back in laughter
watchin' as he bleeds
only to be awakened
from this disturbing mental image
that turns out only to be
one of my bad dreams
signs is what they are
the warrior angels tell me
saying my prayers at night
to ward off the dream demon
if you ain't knowin' trust me
once you done what i done
you would be believin'
as i'm hunted daily by these
antagonizing images hidin' messages
triggered by vicious ambitions of violence
when will these disturbing mental images stop

-Ben, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Maybe you're right and warrior angels are in a spiritual fight to free you from demons that would seize your soul and throw you in a hole that never hits bottom to you've fallen to eternal night. It may feel like spiritual war is hell, but you'd know different if you ever fell. So rise toward the light and all will be well. Just keep doing what's right when you wake each morning; keep praying for strength —and be grateful for angels' warnings.

I Woke Up This Morning...

And I went to court.
I was hoping for a release
but that hope was to be deceased.
When I heard the judge say "six months in Camp Sweeney,"
I really wasn't trippin'
But I was hoping for "released"
Now I gotta do my time,
It's all time to clear my mind,
To think of what to do,
Once I get free of time,
So when I woke up this morning
I asked myself,
How long will the judge mourn me
A "gangsta"?
A "thug"?
Will they some day show me love?
Or will the next step be the "Y"?
And then will I ask, "why?"
Or will I prevent it?
"Hell Yeah!"
But if I can't,
It's 'cause the "G" in me
Is doing it's "G" thang
So when I woke up this morning
I seen my future flash before my eyes.

-Lil' Jose, 150 Crew

From The Beat: You were able to lay out your thoughts and questions in such a creative way. You are very smart Jose. You know what you got to do to prevent the "Y" and more incarcerated years passing you by. The "G" in you may feel like this uncontrollable disease, but you have more power over this mental disease than you think. What will be the "medicine" that can help you see past this "G" shhh and help you see your loved ones and a good future? Programs? A job? Education?

RIP Miguel aka Snoopy

On the twentieth of February, two days after my birthday, my homeboy Miguel aka Snoopy, was ran over by the police while we were at our park.

After we heard the loud crash, me and a few other people ran over there, watching our homeboy laying there in a pool of blood around his head.

Since the police were the ones who hit him, they were there before us and wouldn't let us near him. Everybody sayin, "Wake up! Wake up!" But he never did wake up.

His mom called soon afterwards and said that he had died in the ambulance. The police still won't admit they did it.

-Casper, 150 Crew

From The Beat: You make that terrible moment feel real when you describe Miguel there with his head lying in a pool of his own blood — and everyone shouting, "Wake up!" What a disturbing image to carry in your mind! RIP Miguel aka Snoopy.

Gunshots

before i came to jail
i was at giant burger
and this dude got out his car
it was a buick on dubbs
and when he was getting out
to get his food some dude
put a gun to his head and said
give me your keys
and he gave him the keys
and he took off running
and they shot at him
i don't know if he got shot
because i had to get up out of there
so they wouldn't shoot me
but the streets ain't safe no more
so that makes me feel
that i have to be careful

-Bobby, 150 Crew

From The Beat: You couldn't have been more careful that day. So you must be thinking of other days when you take chances and put yourself out there in harm's way. Thanks for sharing this scary story — we all need to take warning and be careful.

Standouts

I Woke Up This Morning

I woke up this morning and said "shhh". I forgot I was in here.

The things that I dream of get the best of me. Half of the time in here I spend it in reality, and the other half I'm asleep. That's when I enjoy the most of my time. Sleep, I know whoever is reading this agrees with me on this and the people that are out, I don't think you would like to wake up to hear doors unlocking and strangers telling you that you have ten minutes to wash up, meaning taking care of your hygiene. And the thoughts start shooting to my head about being in here another day, well, at least I know that I am another day closer to my release day, and I don't even have a release date yet. But, that's logical, common sense.

Every day I try to achieve something, even though I'm in here I can still read sources to get smarter and hit push-ups to get stronger. When you exercise it does put you in the right state of mind. And it also makes you focus.

Like the saying goes "you have to make the best out the worst" and that's exactly what I'm applying into my life right now and always. I ain't tryin' to sound like no square, but, even if I was it doesn't matter to me 'cause it ain't showin' I'm weak. It's showing in brave-hearted and intelligent.

Much love to all the homeboys.

-Lil' John, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Lil' John, you don't sound like a square, you sound smart. You're in control of your life. Someone who is concerned with how others think, that's weak. You are taking your situation, and making the best out of it. It takes a strong person to do that. Oh, and sleep, shhh... who doesn't love to sleep?

I Apologize Mom

i owe an apology to my mother
because she told me
that i should be good
and i did not listen
so she did the right thing for me
she turned me in
and i owe a lot of apologies to her
because she did not want me
here in the hall
so i apologize for everything i did wrong
i apologize mom

-Samuel, 150 Crew

From The Beat: It's praiseworthy that you can see the one who turned you in, deserves your apologies. But saying "sorry" is not enough — you'll need to earn her trust by showing you can do just exactly what she said: "Stay out of trouble!" She doesn't want to see you locked up — or dead!

My Uncle

When I was young a ninja my uncle used to live at my house. He was on his way to a record release party. I asked him for five dollars and five minutes later he was shot and killed. That was my last time hearing his voice that messed me up till this day.

I wish I could erase that scene out my mind, but I can't, so I ain't. I want to say rest in peace to my Uncle J-Rich, and I want to ask why the good die young?

-Bear Weezy B2, SF/YGC

From The Beat: We're sorry for you, your uncle and your family. The effects of violence last so much longer than the incident itself. Although it's probably hard to figure out, do you have any ideas about what witnessing such violence at such a young age did to your mentality? Was your Uncle J-Rich a good person? Was he an innocent bystander when he was shot or was he mixed up with something?

Extasy

pop one
pill and you'll
see why the name
of this drug fits
the feeling
so beautiful
so much love
not so addictive
not until you're
done thizzlin' then
come' the bad part
probably didn't
think your brain cells
would be gone
by morning did you
— no
you think you'll
ever be the same
— no
what made you pop
— no
is that the only
word you know
— no
what other word
do you know
— extasy

-Tydiallmighty, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Sleep deprivation will have you hallucinating, seeing shadows in the corners of the room, till visions of impending doom end in a grave or juvenile-hall gloom. Choose ways to enjoy days of freedom, then strive to keep 'em.

How Are You Going To Change?

How am I going to change? By leaving all my desmadres aside, what I mean is, stop smoking drinking and try my best to stop coming to jail. I know that if I accomplish my goals, I could succeed in life, if I get a chance to go to college.

I believe I can make somebody out of this crazy vato. I'm going to quit all the things that make me, bring me down. And I know I can accomplish this method.

"Are you going to stop kickin' it with the homies? Seriously, if you stay affiliated, you're going to come back."

Honestly, I can try my best. I'm not saying I will but if there is a reason why I have to, I will do it. You say, if you stay affiliated, you will come back, not exactly. I can be somewhere where I know I won't affiliate with the homies. But, I know what people think. There's gangs all over, and you know what, if you set your mind to do something, you can do anything you desire. And to end this I say you can stay away from the homies.

-Sanchez, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Your right. If you set your mind to something, you can accomplish it. You have got your mind made up, take care of yo' business. We would love to see you succeed. Write us from college.

pop one pill and you'll see why the name of this drug fits

Lil' Youngin's Page

Reasons Part One

Reasons why are dreams, dreams and why is temptation, temptation. When you look, is there a reason for what takes place on these hateful pain throbbing ghetto streets? It's like the only time we kill is when we kill each other — is there a reason? What's the reason for the crooked cops holdin' glocks and they know how most of us youngstas feel?

It's like cops give a damn about a young ninja. They pull the trigger and kill a kid and say he's a menace. It has changed, that's how it is these days. Is there reason a young ninja doin' wild shhh talkin' mad shhh. I neva had shhh so when I go out to go fend for myself, it's difficult — they call me a criminal. I want g's so they label me a criminal. Sometimes I ask myself how much is a young black life worth? A dollar or two 'cause we'll kill each other over one. My family tree was nothin' but thug ninjas, hustlers, and killas. And now that it is a new year and a new day, they ask the youth and people that don't know what goes on in the 'hood. They wonder and think when will the violence stop?

I say to myself that, they said a long time ago that the violence will end, but still I see no change. I think the reason is that they need to take the evil out the people that don't be actin' right 'cause the reasons why some don't love 'cause they can't love their self due to the lack of love. And those are even more reasons for failure.

-Lil' Youngin, 150 Crew

From The Beat: In this piece, are you talking about yourself? Do you feel that you don't love yourself? Do you think that in order to love yourself, you have to have been loved at one point or another? What about you — do you think that you can change yourself and the things you do? Can you lead the way to a better day?

Youngin Blues

I went through moms bickerin'
In and out of the kitchen
with problems 'cause pops was in and out of prison
No role model, moms did all she could
While I was in the streets makin' a livin' in the 'hood
I was taught to bring ya buddy when it's time to roam
'Cause I got hit last time I left mine at home
I was caught up in temptation selling drugs catching cases
I skipped, left it behind me, now I got the youngin blue
Sometimes I wake up in the morning
and I ask myself is life worth livin'
'Cause this can't be life
Never, not my plans, I get up and throw up my hands
I'm through with it, I took two
I want more than the fame, most people are insane
They already destined my future;
they said I'll be just like my dad
And that's something I have
So don't ask me why I got the youngin blues

-Lil' Youngin, 150 Crew

From The Beat: You have been through hella drama and heartbreak in your life, but remember, you are the controller of your destiny. It doesn't always have to be like this. You can alter the things in your life that you are not content with. Where do you want to be five or ten years from now and how can you get there?

What You know

What you know about the running
The weapons the jewels or even the journey
Stuck with no path
The fears the aches the pain the game with no gain
I need spiritual growth
But it seems like trouble is clenching my throat
Going through quiet meditations with daily dedications
No spirit at work
The feeling of failure not even knowing success
But you got hope to succeed hiding my pain by poppin' Es
and smoking weed
Committing to change but ya patnas ain't with it
The hours you practice when the class is finished
Practicing with no winning
You're tired but not finished

-Lil' Youngin, 150 Crew

From The Beat: You want to change, but your friends are stuck in the game. "Show me your company and I'll show you what you are" — an old saying. In short, will you let your friends bring you down? How can you make your future a success? How can you make sure that you aren't caught in the system's web for the rest (and best) of your life?

Thoughts, Part One

What was the thought going on in my mind when I was out committing crimes, no thoughts about doing time. Never had a thought in elementary that I'll see the penitentiary. Now people justify us as being raw and heartless, but they never thought about how it's a struggle everyday, and sometimes it's hard to move on. The world is a ghetto and it's no way you can escape it.

Don't have thoughts like the streets and the 'hood is all cotton candy and flowers — it ain't when you got ninjas that wanna make sure your casket is closed. When people have those thoughts about people on the streets just worrying about money, cash, and females. I'm from the 'hood and those are not my thoughts. I want more than that. Life is more serious than materialistic figures and things like that, and when you look back to tha streets you see you got something out of it, you could have got game, you could have got and learned some stuff you never knew.

My last thought is I never in a million years would I have thought I'll be huggin' on my mama from a jail cell after our lil' two hour visit. These are most of my thoughts.

-Lil' Youngin, 150 Crew

From The Beat: You kinda sound like Tupac with your words. Do you want to change your ways? Do you want to make it so that you can hug your mama without the jail cell in between you? What can you do to make your mother proud? How can you make your future better than your past?

Do You

Do you think the streets love you? The streets really don't luv you, the streets have never seen your face, the streets don't even know your name, feel me? Even though people on streets in the 'hood might know you, you can walk these streets a million days and a million nights and the streets wouldn't even know you or think of knowing your name, 'cause they can't think. The streets don't love nobody, do you know that?

Do you know whenever you die, the same street will still be there? While you locked up, yo' patnas is still out there grindin' on that same street? That street will be there longer than your natural body.

Do you know they say we pollute our neighborhoods? We never forced anybody to buy drugs. Do you know the reason why most of us have so many problems in life is because we don't listen? You have to know how to play life from every position like chess — even though it's not a game. Do you they know it's hard to think when you're tired from not getting no sleep? 'Cause you worried about money or somebody lookin' for me, do you?

-Lil' Youngin, 150 Crew

From The Beat: You're right; the same streets that you love so much are the same streets that take your friends lives! And the game that people are so dedicated to is the same game that beats the shhh out of you and is beating the shhh out of you right now. You'll always lose. Will you continue to play?

the reason why most of us have so many problems in life is because we don't listen

Standouts

Tishay And Boog Money's Page

Never Comin' Back

makin' beats on my walls
sittin' in my cell
wishin' i could get up and get bail
but i'm in juvenile hall
so the time i gotta do it all
still standin' on my feet
why they expectin' me to fall
it gets on my nerve
with staff tellin' me what to do
livin' all my life with freedom
now look what i'm going through
tellin' me to do this and do that
man i'll stay in my room if that
was really where my head was at
this shhh is never gonna get me again
and i'm never comin' back
this is my first and my last time wearing
go casuals pink tees and blue slacks
like i said once i leave here
it ain't 'cause i'm scared
it's just ain't nothing here for me
so i don't really care
i'm never coming back

-Tishay, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Some will say you're going square 'cause you're scared, but you need to know they're paralyzed with fear not you — that's what keeps bringing them back again, too! You're right to desire freedom with all your might; as long as you keep the goal of staying free clearly in sight — and that means you have to do it right. We're just trying to say, you can do it, Tishay! You will see that better day.

Keep Your Head Up

sometimes we smile
to hide the pain
most of the time
we cry in the dark
we cover our minds
so that no one
can get to our hearts
but in life
there are different parts
so take
everything as a lesson
and count
the good as blessings
'cause we always
move on
and don't stay
in one section
for you
keep your head up
and i will too
you know who
you are
and i do too

-Tishay, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Some poems are personal and some are private. The private ones, no one else understands. The personal ones, go for the hearts of all readers — and they understand. Your personal lyrics touch all our spirits.

They Thought They Loved

he said he loved her and they'd never part
she said the same and gave him her heart
he shared his dreams with her with truth in his eyes
she told him how she really felt and never held it inside
he never could lie to her even if he tried
she gave him her last when he needed it to get by
he comforted her when she cried
she cherished him with her life
he asked her to be his wife
she would break down and wonder why he wouldn't
come home some nights
he said he wouldn't hurt her at all
she was scared of how much she had felt
he sometimes hit her and yelled
she always thought about him
he never really wanted it to be them
she was in love with him truly
he left her forlorn and abandoned her cruelly
she will never give a man her heart
and he will never know of her life or be a part
— they thought they loved

-Tishay, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Too many remain confused about hitting and yelling and love, as in the relationship you portray above. It may be as true of him as it was of you, but the one doing the hitting needs to get a clue! A man should hit a woman never. Much less one he says he loves forever! And a woman should never say, "It's okay." It doesn't matter what words he used, hitting is abuse! It destroys whatever love exists, when a bruise is married to a kiss. Those who've lived this way, need to stop and say, "Not today! Not ever!" The movement of your poem from paradise to stormy weather to disaster, is masterfully achieved, and your last line heavy with grief.

Leading To Death

Guns lead up to death
And a funeral makes a mother wear a black dress
Crying her heart out 'cause her only son left
'Cause someone took his life and that's a crime that's almost like theft
But what mother deserves her only son's death?
Even though it seems like there was nothing left
But it's God that strengthens the one that suffers from death
But I love my cousin so I know there's something left
And he's in heaven so I know I'm gon' be blessed
And he's looking over my life to change me for the best
RIP Ray Ray

-Boog Money, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Why do you think that the Oakland streets are infested with guns? Why are people so ready to take the life of someone's daughter or son? Where does this desperation come from? Do you think that the violence will ever be over and done?

Goes On

When I wake up in the morning and the sun hits my face
I stress off my time in this messed up place
I'm mad at the wall and I'm mad at that door
I'm mad at my life 'cause it's trapped in this war
Life is going on and the streets is going dumb
This jail life is crazy, but what have I become?
Trapped in the Halls but this life is no fun
But when the door closes and the light goes off
I think it's pausing
But I realize life is always going on
RIP Ray Ray

-Boog Money, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Can you channel your anger into positive energy to for change? Anger cannot drive out anger; only tranquility can do that. Can you turn your weaknesses into your strengths?

Lil' Mama Hanna And Rasheed's Page

Street Poem

gangs was invented
to help the 'hood
but now'days we use gangs
to be up to no good
people dying
parents crying
and everybody is sick
we need god in the world
to help us wit' this
time is flyin' by
and i'm losing parts of my life
but by the time jesus comes back
none of this would be right
one of these days
all our hearts will stop
and then we'll all be dead
and our bodies will drop
i used to be postin' on my block
but then i got caught
by the police while servin' a knock
now i'm locked up
and i'm never gettin' out
i just don't know
what this life's about

-Rasheed, 150 Crew

From The Beat: When revelation comes to your heart and mind, old ways die and are left behind. Don't wait for your heart to stop to drop old ways. You will get out, and when you do — quit the mob and get a job to make your pay. But start the change today.

My True Feelings dedicated to Pastor J-Wizzle

Thank you for being real, 'cause most people ain't! Well, you are kind of right. My feelings are hidden, 'cause most of the time it's kind of hard for me to express them.

One of the guys I had feelings for and cared for, started cattin' off and left me hurt and in sorrow. So I started not trusting certain people, and it became harder to let people know how I feel — 'cause when I did, he would run away or be talkin' about some ol' other stuff.

So I wasn't feelin' it. So I started to tell myself, "Let me hide my feelings, 'cause I might be better off that way."

I've read most of your writings, and all I gotta say is — I wish I had a boyfriend like you, 'cause you are real. And you ain't never scared to tell your girl how you truly feel. That shows you're a real man, which is what a girl like me really needs.

I'm too much of a woman for most of these young-minded boys, and they ain't ready for the pressure! And I see that you have a man's mentality, instead of a boy's; and that's good.

The guy that I was with before, used to look at me different because I had respect for myself. He was used to them girls who was some rats; and, me, I didn't get down like that. So he felt like he couldn't be with me, 'cause I wasn't them type of girls he was used to. So we fell off.

And ever since then, I started hidin' my feelings, so they wouldn't get hurt no more. I hope I can marry someone who is as smart as you, so that in our relationship, we both will be able to game each other up instead of me being the only one.

Well, Pastor J-Wizzle, stay writing, and keep your head up. Hopefully one day I'll be able to write as well as you. Holla back!

-Lil' Mama Hanna, 150 Crew

From The Beat: As you will read in one of this issue's pieces by Jepeabo (aka Pastor J-Wizzle), he grew up with three sisters and got game from them on a woman's point of view. But what's really important in your piece, is how you're expressing yourself, telling the world about where you've been and how you feel! It's the only way to be recognized and respected for who you are — a young woman with self-respect who won't lower herself to please some player. Hold out for better because you deserve better. And you already do write well!

Why Be Shy?

why is it that you're shy
to talk to me
i ain't gonna bite
why is it that you
tell your partna
to tell me if it's cool
why is it you feel
i'm gonna turn you down
no baby boy
it's not even like that
how you know i ain't
diggin' your style
you look at me
and start to smile
which makes me wonder
why you so shy
all you gotta do is say
what's on your mind
and maybe for a change
you can get a good response
but only if you got a mouthpiece
which you do
but you ain't tryin' to use it
like i always say
a closed mouth
don't get fed

-Lil' Mama Hanna, 150 Crew

From The Beat: We're glad to see you put words to the page these days, and your writing deserves praise. But we want to see you extend your gaze beyond relationships in your face, positive or negative. Write about your life — problems, tests, successes or failures. Write about growing up. How did you get here? Where do you want to be? What are your hopes and fears?

Hard Time

for fourteen years i suffered nothing but pain
i just wish maybe one day i could stop the rain
my life is so crazy since i got into drugs and alcohol
i remember when i used to holla at girls up at the mall
picture a fourteen year old wit' a mouth full of gold
always gotta go and always got dough
always got new stuff and stay wit' new clothes
all i wanted then was the next six pack
now all i want is my life back
and all i want in my life is peace and love
i wish i could erase all the thieves and thugs

-Rasheed, 150 Crew

From The Beat: If you erase the thug and the thief in your own mind, you will have changed your world for all time! Plant peace and love in your heart; then watch the changes start. You can't change the past, but you can make changes that last.

Lil' Jepeabo's Page

Women/Girls: An Interview With Pastor J-Wizzle

[A = Allen; P = Pastor aka Jepeabo]

A — We need to know, Pastor, what do females want?

P — Well, women need time, love, affection, and trust.

A — What do you mean by that?

P — What I mean is that a woman/girl with a guy, becomes most disoriented when the guy doesn't spend time giving her love, showing her affection, and proving her trust is well-founded.

A — Now, why would you say a thing like that?

P — Man, haven't you noticed I live with three sisters! They gave me the game and knowledge on how to pick apart or dissect, analyze, a woman's heart, self-esteem, and pride.

A — So you think living with a bunch of girls makes you so smart and confident that you know everything about females there is to know?

P — Well, no. And I say this because you can never figure everything out about any female. If you do, then you must be a genius.

A — So, tell me, do you have a girlfriend?

P — Right now I've been in a relationship with my girlfriend and soon to be wife for three years now.

A — So, Pastor, tell me, how will a female know that her man is giving her the love and affection she needs?

P — Well, if her man is true and his heart is peaceful and open, she will be able to feel it in his touch and hear it in his words.

A — How does a woman know when her man is lying?

P — A woman can tell when a man is lying if he fidgets a lot and blinks too much, if he doesn't look at you and never makes eye-contact, or if he just walks around too much.

A — Well, until next time, Pastor.

P — Anything you need, anytime, Allen. — Holla atcha boy!

-Lil' Jepeabo, 150 Crew

From The Beat: We're sure Allan's flattered to see his name in your dialogue, but mainly pleased that you ask yourself probing questions in his name — if it makes you go deeper and think about what you do and why! But don't be afraid to push yourself to the point of self-doubt, for out of such apparently negative moments, new positive progress arises. This method is called "dialectic" and is a challenging form of teaching. According to the Ancients, the object of dialectic is not merely truth but also love. We hope to read more of your dialectic in weeks to come.

you shall learn a lot from another one's failure

Part Three: Real Love

dedicated to Tyresha
lil' mama this is what real love is like
it's never a win or lose situation when you fight
but you know it's love when they support you one hundred per cent
don't mean it can't be a gangster or a thug
so just only a few may have space for you
but the rest only take you though for a pretty cent
baby girl there is not such thing as love at first sight
it takes time to love somebody that is why we don't make love
we have lustful acts that are intimately passionate
j-lo could tell ya love don't cost a thing but that's my opinion
to tell someone that you love them and want to stay with them forever doesn't mean that you love them
i say this because you can base your whole relationship on lust and it'll still work out
tyresha i ain't gon' lie to you because i been through my share of hardships a time or two
so say if you love something and you let it go
and it come back to you then you'll know it's real love
but if it don't then it wasn't meant to be
my hardships are like fallen angels
i've just been falling through relationships
until three years ago on may seventh of two thousand and one
that's when i met my baby'mama
and it took us two years before we said i love you
we need trust and responsibility
also we both put our hearts into our relationship
next year we will be getting married
but back to you tyresha
love doesn't make everything peachy
so hear these words and listen to my teaching
you shall learn a lot from another one's failure
lil' mama your love will become as still as the water
continue to pray to god
and your knight in shining armor
will come to find you
please don't give in to that man's bullshoot
because he doesn't love you
he wants passion and lust
baby girl trust in your mind and heart and soul
true/real love shall never let you go
i don't even know you as good as i could
but maybe i should
so maybe you could write back in the beat
and together we could teach
each other a thing or two about love
yadda talkin' 'bout

-Lil' Jepeabo, 150 Crew

From The Beat: You see pretty clearly that lust alone will not lead to trust or a happy home. And that's good advice. But what's that part about a young woman giving her heart to a gangster or a thug? We know gangsters and thugs need love, too — but are you really recommending Tyresha or any young lady choose to give her love to someone who continues to live outside the law? Haven't you seen enough of the trouble that life draws? Here you are incarcerated with a baby on the way! Rather we say, if it is true love, a gangster or a thug will change his ways! The life of the street is paved with broken dreams and broken families, too. If your love is true, make a new start for you and your boo!

Lil' Jepeabo And Abbas' Page

Love For You

baby girl it's just me and you
you act crazy but i still got love for you
mama you don't see me but i still got love for you
it hurts to know that you're not there
not to be able to kiss and touch you
but i still got love for you
i hate that you are a jealous girlfriend
but to trust and believe in me is all you need
'cause you don't but i still got love for you
you want me just like i want you girl
you talk but hearin' you clouds my mind
yet i got love for you nevertheless
you take my stress away
freedom is what i'll give you everyday
i still got love for you baby girl
i will always have love for you
together or separated
the beginning of the end

-Lil' Jepeabo, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Sometimes words spoken in anger or fear make your deepest fears come true. It sounds like you're doing your best not to let this happen to you. Patience and an open heart are a must, if your family is to grow on a foundation of trust.

freedom is what i'll give you everyday

Why Do I?

why me
what did i do to you
why do i feel so much hurt
it feels as though
you left me with no more love
why
it's hard to cope with the pain
things'll never be the same
just one big lie or game
why do i go through the things i do
it hurts so much just to know it was you
outside it might seem all good
but on the inside i hurt so much
but you just don't care anymore
why do i live in a world full of hatred
my heart now will become cold and sacred
until i find that special one
why do i think like that
my heart has been shattered
for the last time
why do i still love her
because i felt that she is the one
the end
the beginning of the end

-Jepeabo, 150 Crew

From The Beat: From your spoken words outside this piece, it seems that this was but a passing moment on the stormy seas of your young life, and that this dark and hopeless turn of mind was but an episode on the long road of time. Yet for some the moments of doubt and fear, resonate with greater power than when hope draws near. When old wounds open, do dark memories like savage ghosts seize the heart and strangle hope? Then stormy weather, feels like it will last forever!

Judgment Day

you have now entered a zone
where no man has ventured before
no more guns drugs lies or violence
this may be hazardous to some
but to others it will be helpful
everybody please enter at your own risk
this is better known as judgement day
this is the day wherein all those who
have done wrong shall perish and
those who do good shall be left to live
there will be no more guns drugs lies and violence
the wars shall be silenced
peace shall reign among all the nations
— amen —
negative will turn into positive
if you let live and love to learn
— amen —
let the light shine on those with a good heart
and darkness fall on those with a cold one
— amen —
corruption dirty dealing just plain ol' lies
will be no more so for the rest of your life
ask god for forgiveness and he shall bless you
— amen —
the beginning of the end

—Lil' Jepeabo, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Every day is Judgement Day, any day, for the individual whose eyes see a higher reality to which he or she surrenders life, will, and heart! Then the healing starts with every gesture of generosity, every act of forgiveness, every courageous resistance to the so-called easy ways of yesterday that only brought pain and rain where darkened sight saw gain. In the end Judgement Day is how you judge yourself in thought and deed, for flames of hell and greed transform into heat of love with God's speed, and lightness of spirit brings relief to cold hearts buried beneath the hate and grief of 'hood disease whether in the street or in a penthouse suite of corporate elite on Judgement Day.And the lion shall lie down with the lamb and none go hungry in the promised land on Judgment Day. Amen.

I Thought I Was Home

I woke us this morning and thought I was at home.
I woke up this morning wishing I was home.
I woke up this morning and realized how sick I am of this place.
I woke up this morning thanking Allah for another day at life.

-Abbas, 150 Crew

From The Beat: You have such a strong ability to turn a negative into a positive. This is important in your situation. Allow yourself to feel down but keep doing what you're doing, realizing how blessed you are.

Apologize

I think I owe my mom an apology for this ordeal I'm going through. I have apologized to her but I want to get out of here and show her how sorry I am.

I think there are two types of apologies. One is verbal and the other is showing you're really sorry.

I don't think anyone owes me an apology.

-Abbas, 150 Crew

From The Beat: You will have time to do this for your mother, Abbas. You are right that actions speak louder than words, but love and care sometimes are beyond words and actions. You don't have to wait to get out to show her love. We are sure your loved ones feel this love from you and that's real.

Standouts

Lil' Kev's Page

Stuck Here

i've been here for too long
six months
man that's long
i should've been gone
but my system
could not stay clean
smoking purple
drinking hennessey
why did i do it
family deceased
got me all stressed out
and they can't
respect my mind
forget it
i'll bounce and then
i live mine
but no
i didn't run so
now i'm here for
the weekend
hella bored
all my patnas gone home
but look at me
stuck here
all because i wanted
to smoke weed
and pop 'e's
while sippin' on hennessey
all that got me
stuck here

-Lil' Kev, 150 Crew

From The Beat: So close to the end of your program, when the same brain that told you to break weak with weed, E's and drank — told you to run from Camp! But at least you didn't play the fool twice. You took the advice of your better side. And in that wise restraint, you can take pride.

Camp Kid

remember me
the one with the illest rhymes
yeah i'm back
i quit for a minute
'cause i had to get
something off my shoulder
my brother got killed
and i damn near lost it
to all y'all out there
who have a family member
that y'all love so much
please keep 'em close as possible
'cause i let my brother go
for a few minutes
and lost him
now i'm back at camp
can't wait to someone
say something out of pocket
so i could let 'em feel the power
camp been cool for me
i'm pimping my program
first week in july and i'm gone
home sweet home
i caught a few dirties
due to all my stress
but it's nothing
because i'm blessed
the lord knows my problems
so he gon' lead me on
but he told me
when he let me go this time
to do the right thing
and when i'm thinking about a crime
just think about camp

-Lil' Kev, 150 Crew

From The Beat: With all the stress you've been through, you already know that you can pass any test on the outs, 'cause you've learned what you're really about. Sure, you caught those dirties when you were lost in grief — but when they held you at Camp, you didn't leave! You overcame the intensity of your pain just enough to hang on and do the right thing! But forget about a fool bumping his gums, 'cause you know both where you're going and where you came from. Stay strong. Well done.

Big Bra

man why they have to kill
my bra nell
he was so quiet
all he did was smoke purple
and sip hennessey
but you know what
they say the good die young
man i miss my bro
i remember the night he died
i heard the shots
but didn't know
what was going on
so i laid down and went to sleep
the next day i heard
he was left to sleep
man i wild' out
i went to camp and played it all cool
but deep down inside
i felt i was going to die
i really miss you big bra
and can't wait to see you again
the pictures ain't working
and the purple messing up my memories
but i could never forget
about big bra
love always lil' kev
r-i-p nell

-Lil' Kev, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Your story is petrifying, to have heard a shot and not know your brother was dying! But then, maybe as he closed his eyes forever and you drifted into the world of dreams, your spirits met. And that night his soul learned that when he feels alone he can still return to be with you in dreams. And for sure, he wants you to be cured of the disease that infects life in the street — be cured and when you're free, to stay free! RIP Nell.

Haters

these ninjas crazy
running around here
out of their bodies
hating snitching acting like ...
and i wish a ninja would
he gon' be mad
he thought about testing me
he gon' regret ever
looking at me funny
why do people hate
when they could
do the same or better
that's something i will never
know but i do know
i will never become a hater

-Lil' Kev, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Don't go off 'cause some fool looks at you funny. You've gotten this far by taking care of your own business, and letting fools be foolish as they wanna be. Then they'll see who's laughing when you walk out of Camp — free!

Let Me Go

will they ever let me go
that's something only they know
well it's something i hope
i try to do right but end up doing wrong
i stopped selling drugs and went back to school
i ain't a player no more
i got only one woman
i am a young black man
with dreams of getting rich
so why can't they let me live
i know i did wrong
but i've served my time for that
been in and out of the hall
and now at camp
for the same ol' dope case
that i keep getting violated on man
they don't really want to let me go
but it's cool 'cause i'll be gone someday
they can't hold me forever
so you know what that mean'
they have to let me go

-Lil' Kev, 150 Crew

From The Beat: You know you'll be out soon, you just caught a few dirties when your brother was killed and you were feeling ill, too! All you have to do is stay clean for a few more weeks. Yeah, there may be moments when that's a hard thing to do — but we know you! When you have to, you always come through. When you want to smoke, pop or drank; just remember you're almost out of Camp! And when you're home free, you'll remember how to say no whenever you please.

Drugs

some are bad
and some are all right
weed is controllable
heroin is a mind controller
ecstasy is relaxin'
and alcohol is a party thing
powder is a mind teaser
and newports are stress relievers
i've only did weed
ex and drank and tobacco
all the rest i think is really wacko
i will never stoop so low
as to put anything up my nose
i know i was trippin'
when i took the 'e' pill
but i stopped when i found out
what would happen in the future
but later on i will find out
what's my cause and effect
of all types of drugs
so i plan to stop while i'm ahead

-Lil' Kev, 150 Crew

From The Beat: Those who've been addicted point out quick, it's not the drug that makes addiction stick — it's the addict. For sure, you don't want to mess with methamphetamine (which, by the way, is the same family tree as ecstasy), heroin or cocaine — but if you use whatever, regardless of the negative consequence it brings you, then you're an addict, too. So figure out your "cause and effect" soon!

Lil' June, Shomoe And Danny's Page

Camp Life

I first came to Camp on December fifth of 2003. It felt so good to leave the Hall after a couple of months. When I came here there were a few of my patnas that had got here before me, like: Kasper, Slim, Skeet, Twilight, and a few others.

So here I was, a new booty at Camp, doing a four-to-six month program. As time went on, I was getting real bored, so I decided to keep myself busy. I started to work in the kitchen and then in the commissary; I was on student council, too. And by the end of my program, I was real busy.

Now it's the twentieth of May, and I get released in seven more days. I'm on my way to Treasure Island Job Corps in San Francisco. I also completed my GED in here. So I can say that I did accomplish and learn some things here at Camp Sweeney. For those coming up, pimp this program and get out. Gone!

-Lil' June, 150 Crew

From The Beat: You truly had a good strategy on how to do your time so your time didn't do you. You may not have been perfect on weekends, but you always managed to stay out of trouble and get yourself back to Camp. It's easy to say "pimp this program" — but the newcomers may not know how easy it is to catch charges on weekends or run (and then catch another case, or even if not, catch more time). To make this program work for you, you truly have to work this program! Which you are now successfully completing ! Props on all you've accomplished.

The Choices

the choices i made
landed me in the hall
the choices i made
had me stare at closed walls
the choices i made
cause my family some pain
the choices i made
got me into a fight
the choices i made
had me up all night
the choices i made
had me run away
but everybody makes
choices everyday

-Lil' June, 150 Crew

From The Beat: And as your other piece this week makes clear, you've made some good choices lately — including earning your GED! We wish you all the best with Job Corps. We know you've got what it takes to succeed (if you can lay off the weed).

Blessed With Angel Love

when i met you i knew
there was something different
and i knew it had something to do
with the way you were sent
now i know that heaven
placed my heart in your hands
and i try to capture your heart
that's what i plan
when i think of you
thoughts of love flow through
so i make sure i stay true to you
i need you more than the oxygen i inhale
with you by my side i'll never fail
when i think of your graceful beauty of a dove
it moves me to shower you with love
when i first heard your voice i knew then
that you were an angel from heaven
this is how i know i got angel love
you're even purer than love

-Shomoe, 150 Crew

From The Beat: There is a spiritual propulsion to love, an ineffable purity of emotional focus that lifts the object of affection to supernatural, heavenly, angelic status! Adoration of divine afflatus!

Eighteen Months Clean (and Sober)

I screwed over eighteen months of clean time with a couple of MGD's, some Bacardi Superior. I still can't believe it! That I messed up all that time for a feeling that lasts only a couple of hours!

I don't understand how I screwed it up! I don't understand how I felt like going overboard with it and saying, "I don't wanna be clean anymore!"

So for now, I am stuck in a mode that is hard to shake. But I am trying to get the monkey off my back. So I am struggling for sobriety.

-Shomoe, 150 Crew

From The Beat: We've been reading the stories about the pressure you're under with friends and family. Most of our readers can't understand how you made it eighteen months, but we all understand and recognize that moment of insanity! If accumulating clean time fed your ego with pride, that's what did it. You remember that savage self-destructive pride you felt when you were at your craziest? Humility keeps you clean. And there's nothing humbler (or, paradoxically, more noble) than an addict with one day clean. Don't use today, and you'll have more clean time than you did yesterday! Yet clean time is always and only just for today. Don't struggle, surrender your ego, amigo.

The Phone Call

When I got locked up, I first called my mom. It was really the only person I could think of at that time. I was feeling kind of guilty because I have been going through this routine for awhile, getting locked up and calling my people and telling them I am about to do another bid. It hurts them every time, but it's a cycle that is hard to break.

She was disappointed and crying, but she knew when I stepped into the door covered in blood from where we got to rumbling. I was in some deep shhh and a couple hours later she was coming to the station picking up my things.

She asked me, "why?" What could I say? We had to do this. I just had to chump up and go through interrogation again. Anyway that first phone call is always the worst.

-Danny, Virginia

From The Beat: It's tough to face those you love after doing some dirt. The question she asked you was a good one. Why? Do you think in a way that revenge really is the fair thing to do? Can you see that it adds to the hurt of family and friends (of both parties) and continues violence? Take this time to think this one out. You owe it to yourself and your loved ones.

What Does The System Owe Me?

For real, the system don't owe me a darn thing. If I went here, I wouldn't have to deal with it. Sometimes when I read The Beat, there are people that say the system do this and that. You kinda put yourself in the situation. If you hustle crack, rob hats, kick in cribs; you're really doing it to yourself.

The system didn't put that ya yo in the pot and cook it up, nor did it tell you to bring in a percentage. All the system did was wait for you to slip so it can throw the blanket over you. Some can slip the cover, but it is far and few.

So in my eyes the system don't owe us nothing. We the one that tripped, not them. They just caught us.

-Danny, Virginia

From The Beat: This is a different tune. We don't hear this much. You are right that there is personal responsibility and with this perspective you have more power. We also can understand how some people point out how the system doesn't help or rehabilitate people or that money does not go into schools or the community of the ghetto. There are inconsistencies but you are ultimately right. It is up to you. Get the support systems you need.

"I Woke Up This Morning And. . ."

Happy to Still Be Alive

I woke up this morning and was happy to still be alive, to live another day, because when I'm on the street I always think about whether I'm going to die or not. I'm not trying to jinx myself, but that's how I think when I'm on the streets.

I still can't wait till I get out of here, but when I get out I know I'm going to change —because I still want to do and see things that I have not yet done in my life. And to me, my life is too special for me to allow myself to end up getting shot or sent to prison.

And I always thank God while I'm at Camp Sweeney that I got a chance to see San Quentin. It was something I needed to see, how it is in there! But that is all I wanted to say. Bye.

-Papa

From The Beat: All change begins with the decision to change, so — you've already begun to change! But it takes more than words to change a life. You know where you don't want to be. Do you know what you don't want to do? Not ever, no matter what! Have you put thought into finding a job, a legal way to make money?

I'm Back In the Hall

What's crackin'? This Yung Lazy writing from the Hall. I woke up the other morning and went to go pick up my homeboys to go get a haircut and to pick up some flyers to pass out at this party I was gonna go to later on that night. When we run into some rivals, we pulled over and hopped out....

But to make a long story, short — they called the five-oh, and a street down we got pulled over. They searched my ride, found brass knuckles and arrested me, Shorty, Muggs, and Sticky, 'cause no one admitted to the knuckles. But my homeboy is about to confess that they was his. So if Lazy's lucky, he'll head back up to Camp.

Man, why the placa (police) lock us homies up for this, when our rivals get away with bats, shovels and stuff, all the time! This is my first time being in the Hall for some little nothing like this. The placa got it twisted, straight up.

-Yung Lazy

From The Beat: We can't seem to get you to hear this: You don't have to start the mess! Just roll past trouble is the best. Trust, it will come your way someday anyway — but you keep walking straight at it. We know you'll say you have to do what you have to do. We say, don't just throw your freedom away.

When I Woke Up!

When I woke up this morning and I heard that "wash up" phrase, I just thought to myself — damn another damn day in Juvenile Hall.

Sometimes when I wake up in the morning, I just wish that I could've woke up in my bed in my house, but this is reality and I have to live with this shhh until my case is over. I just wish that they could hurry up.

-Lil' Carlos

From The Beat: What are you doing to make the best of your time in Juvenile Hall? How can you make sure that you use your time productively?

Why Me?

I woke up this morning, and I was thinking: Why me? I been to Juvenile Hall three times.

It is my last time coming to the Hall, because I'm about to be eighteen years old when I get out. And I don't want to go to the big jail!

So to all the eighteen-year-old's in the Hall — remember, it is the big jail next!

-Lil' Vick

From The Beat: Why you? You're the only one who can find an answer that will keep you out of jail. We suggest you do your best to make up your mind to leave the game behind.

Morning To Night

Well I woke up this morning and started my day off cool. I was in a good mood and had a very good day until one of these two men came to work wanting to be the police, came in and messed up my whole day, light way.

But then my PO came an' talked to me and had some good news and that's what got me back in the mood and that's how it should be. But these staff up here be just telling you what to do like they want to be the police but it's not all the staff.

But they made me hella mad but now I'm back like I said before, but hopefully I will be out this shhh soon and won't come back.

-Back And Forth

From The Beat: Sounds like you are used to not listening to orders and you are very independent. Maybe you are used to being the one in charge. You gave most of that up when you got locked up. Don't waste your breathe on carrying a grudge. It isn't worth your freedom and getting locked up again and then you will have to listen to someone else tell you what to do. Good and bad moods come and go. How will you keep yourself cool through it all?

Life Is Hard

i woke up this morning
thanking god for giving me a chance
to be what i am
life is hard i can't deny
being around places of frustration
without no explanation
sometimes i think and ask myself
what's going through my mind
and as an answer i realize
that this world is full of lies
i can't really complain
'cause this is how we do it in the east bay
chopping it up with girls everyday
and smoking mary j all day everyday
till the day i hit my grave
banging and slanging
putting in work with homies in the varrio
there is no shame in me
'cause that's how i was raised to be
live like a soldier
with no hesitation in my thoughts
but ready to stand up high
when retaliation comes

-Lil' Will

From The Beat: It's time for you to retaliate against being raised for jail bait. We're not talking shame or blame, but no need to take pride in being straight insane. You thank God for giving you a chance, so you can throw it away without a second glance? Why don't you stay away from the yay long enough to open your eyes, okay? You got caught! Now's the time for second thoughts.

Thanking God

I woke up this morning thanking God for another day.
Praying to let me live for another day.
Praying to let me live the next day with a smile on my face
and me and my girl have somewhere to hide to do something where no one can spy on us.
Till that goes down, when I close my eyes and wait till the next day
To see if my eyes will open for my next pray.

-Chris

From The Beat: Do you stay worried on the outs about staying alive and out of juvy? You will not be able to see your girl for long if you continue to live this way. Stay motivated by remembering that you will be stuck with a bunch of dudes in jail if you don't get your stuff together. Keep praying and make some decisions.

I Thought I Was Home

I woke up this morning and I said, damn I thought I was at home.
I woke up this morning and I felt like my room had closed in on me another couple of inches.
I woke up this morning and said damn!
I woke up this morning and I was surprised I had a mug on my face.
I woke up this morning and hit my buzzer and I had to ask the next man, who just like me, for permission to use the bathroom ain't that b?
I woke up this morning and had to look at these same ass J-Cats the punk system forced me to live with.
I woke up this morning and had to roll on some Bob Barker shhh deodorant.
I woke up this morning and had a biscuit for breakfast with a milk.
I woke up this morning and was mad at how rude I was awakened.
I woke up this morning and said damn, The Beat Within is coming tonight! No free rec.

-Emmy-Boe

From The Beat: We love you too. We are giving you a chance to express yourself productively, you are taking this chance and we are glad. Sounds like you are down in the dumps about being incarcerated, who wouldn't be? If you continue to have this attitude though, you will make yourself unhappier than you have to be. How can you just lighten up? It's really up to you, not anyone or thing outside yourself.

I woke up this morning and I was surprised I had a mug on my face.

"I Woke Up This Morning And. . ."

Wishing My Life Was a Dream

I woke up this morning wishing my life was a dream. I'm tired of living in and out of this messed-up system.

I know if I do coo' here at Camp, I have a chance! But sometimes I just feel like running. I look down the hill towards the outs and the inner cities of the East Bay spread out before my gaze, and I get tempted. But you see, I was taught never to run from my problems. So that's why I don't bounce from this weak program.

I went on my first home pass this week, and it was coo'! I got to see my family. So I'm just going to see how long I last up here, because if I do coo' — I'll be out in five months! But if I mess this up, I'm for sure going back to the Hall. And that's the last thing I'm trying to do!

I'm tryin' to get out the system, not get deeper in this shhh! So, stay up and keep on! Al rato.

-Young Gato

From The Beat: You've got the right idea about the way out of this system — do your program, don't mess up, and don't run. But let's say you mess up and you're about to get VOP'd — don't run! You might get sent back to the Hall for a few days, but you'll come right back. Just don't trip! Really, even if you mess up, as long as you don't catch another case, you can get through the Camp program okay! Keep your eyes on the prize all the way.

Wake Up in the Hall

i woke up this morning
and thought about my life
and how it is
and why i am in here
i thought about my mom
r i p lazella
she was something
she really helped me
when she died i started
coming to the hall
for getting money
well my name is travis
and all my brothers
been to the hall
and i woke up
and thought about
my brothers in c y a
i'm not trying to go there
but i am not going to stop
getting as long as i live
but i am not trying
to wake up in the hall
every morning

-Travis

From The Beat: But you know there are other ways to make money, ways that won't get you arrested, ways that aren't against the law. Watching your brothers, you've got to know that if you go on chasing money on the grind, you'll be doing time.

I Woke Up And ...

i woke up this morning
and i was in the hall
i woke up this morning
and had on the next man's draw's
i woke up this morning
and i was looking at four walls
i woke up this morning
and i needed to make a phone call
i woke up this morning
and it was not pretty at all
i woke up this morning
and my bra bra got a release
i woke up this morning
and i really was not me
i woke up this morning
and i really cannot see
i just wanna say r i p
to my big brother critty-bo and lil' jj

-Lil' Day Day

From The Beat: This is no place to be, but then neither is the street when you're slanging dee and catching heat. So if you want to be free and stay that way, change what you do on the outs, okay?

Sad Thoughts

i woke up this morning
and i was sad
i think about my family
all the time
but i do call my family
all the time

-Humberto

From The Beat: Sometimes you can't do what your friends do without hurting yourself and your family, too!

I Woke Up

this morning on the wrong
side of the bed
staff made me mad
i can't stand none
of the staff in here
but ms winn
she is the supervisor
she is the nicest staff
in the hall to me
she is like my mom
but better
i got mad at
two staff today
because one sent me
to my room
for something small
and i said sorry
but she still sent me
in my room
i ain't gon' say
no name but
some staff hate
too much

-Ha Ha Ha

From The Beat: With all your anger, you still took time and space to throw some deep compliments Ms. Winn's way. On a day you got out of the wrong side of the bed, instead of just hating on — you found some love to speak upon! And that's very cool.

Lazy

I woke up this morning feeling lazy like always and wanting to go back to sleep.

-Larry

From The Beat: It must be difficult waking up to being locked up. What new things can you do to keep yourself busy? Be creative.

i woke up this morning

and gave praise to god
that he woke me to see another day
i woke up this morning
and thought i'd see my family
but I was wrong —
juvenile hall is not the place to be

-Lil' Woodah

From The Beat: Change your playgrounds, playmates and playthings to stay free. Then you won't wake up in the morning in juvie.

i got a son that's gonna say "where my daddy at"

I'm'a Survive This Place

I woke up this morning, hoping to get through the day without getting caught up in no trouble — knowing tomorrow I might be able to get out.

I hope the judge will see things my way and let me go home on house arrest or ankle bracelet or something. I've been in here for two weeks and already hate this place.

It's hard not to hate this place, especially considering that I am innocent of the charges filed against me. But whatever, I'm'a survive this place. Late.

-Survivor

From The Beat: You say you're innocent of the charge, and we agree that's hard. But if you stay living a life of trouble, it catches up with you and bursts your bubble; and even if partner did it — you get caught up in it! Staying out of trouble in here is the right thing to do, but you need to take that strategy outside with you.

When I Get Out

i woke up this morning thinking
why am i here locked up
and not outside on my own
man i am trying to do right
and get out of here and not come back
i got a kid that needs me
i can't be here
i got a son that's gonna say
"where my daddy at"
got to be there for him
and i got a daughter
and another son on the way
so i got to be there
to support my family
so i won't see them in here
i am gonna try to get out of here
and get a j-o-b

-Taze

From The Beat: Many at Camp get that job before they've even finished their program. They start work while they're still at Camp, put some money away, plus have a job when they go free! The problem isn't being at Camp, it's the life you were living that brought you to the Hall — and your time at Camp can help you find your way out of that life, starting here and now.

I was taught never to run from my problems

Another Day Gone By

i woke up this morning
and told myself
another day gone by
waiting for my day to come
wishing the month'd go faster
and wishing i could stop
my mom from suffering
'cause of the life i live
it's a gangster's life
to the fullest
till the day the casket drop
then my problems stop
but if you ask me why
i'll tell you it's a generational thing
that's been passed through my family
to my younger and older brothers plus me
we were all raised to be
gangsters

-Giggles

From The Beat: There's always a first. Your whole family doesn't need to be cursed. For your mother's sake, look for a better way for your younger brothers to see they too could take. You're man enough to stand tough on your own, even if you feel all alone.

Weekly Writings

"I Woke Up This Morning And. . ."

Morning Thoughts

I woke up this morning and thought that I was free
but indeed I was locked up struggling deep within me.
Walking in my cell, not even 6:30,
start to hit push ups till my arms start hurtin'!
Shower time gots to be next to another naked man
gots to keep my genitals in my hand.
Washing my body wonderin' who's ready to act up or just act hard but by now these fools already know
I'm past this little shhh, already make my stripes for sho'
Back to the cell looking back on twisted memories
homies that done hit the grave ahead of me
Silent tears wash down my face
I'm serio as hell, my ninjas, there ain't no disgrace
Thinking about shhh that makes me laugh
homeboys think that I'm acting like a gato, but too bad
I'm just tryin' to pass time without constantly being sad
Don't you know I've been down for a minute
I read a sleazy part in a book and tell the homie Chato to get wit' it Frustrated with the fake-ass people that try to act hard all the time
But when your homies ain't around we see you run and hide
Just remember this is jail so the strong only survive
Morning time turned into the afternoon, now I'm on the line
Shhh! I must be trippin',
driftin' back to YA, just reminiscing
Damn! It ain't even breakfast yet I'm still stressin'
but I've learned my lesson
so let me just tell you one more thing:
I hope today can be filled with alright memories
I love you Dennise. I just wanna holla at you
Tell you how I feel 'cause morning time
all I do is think about you

Youngster B5

From the Beat: We wish you'd spit a little of that YA experience you've just had by way of letting other youngsters know what lies along the path they're traveling. We also hope today is filled with good memories for tomorrow, and that you will be able to apply the lessons you've learned to a life of freedom. Just don't forget how much you miss Dennise, and how you don't need to be jailed again...

Time To Wake Up

I woke up this morning and thought about what I would be waking up to if I was out. It would either be one of two things: one of the females I'm messing with at the time, or to my TV and stereo an' the loot I got the previous day with a toy on my night stand.

Looking over I would think about what the night before that held. Probably just being on the corner with the homies, a female call and tell us where somebody out slipping. Whatever happen with that? That's like every day, though.

Some of the other days I wake up I be thinking while I'm going to be taking a shower with other cats, all them females going to be walking in school or driving there. And what I would be doing at that time. Probably getting my clothes coordinated for the day.

I just be thinking hella stuff in the morning.

-Leek B5

From The Beat: That little toy by your nightstand is one of the reasons you aren't out there with those girls you're dreaming of; it's why you're taking showers with a bunch of boys; it's why someone is telling you when to get up, when to go to sleep, whose clothes to wear, when to hit the toilets, when to speak, when to be silent. In short, that little toy has turned you into a slave. Wow, what a great toy!

Sent To Hell

I woke up this morning thinking that things will get better, but every other hour passes I lose hope. By night time I have no idea what's next.

During my time here at juvenile hall I had thought about what happened the day I got caught up. Come to think about it, it wasn't worth it because you the one here without freedom, listening to the bs people be talking about, what they do, what they can do, what they think that they can do.

All this smack I hear makes me want to do good, like go to school, keep it cool with pops, so I can live it up to the fullest, 'cause being in here is a waste of time that they are taking from my life. So the hell with juvenile hall, the police, and the whole justice system. I still stay for another day.

-Jonathan B1

From The Beat: You can say "to hell with the whole justice system," but it seems to us that you're the one in hell, and they put you there. Or, more precisely, you gave them the hook that let them put you there. If you are living a life in which you aren't breaking those rules, then you have nothing to worry about. Haven't you learned some valuable lessons in the Hall (like all the things you've realized you want to do), which means maybe it wasn't such a waste of time after all.

I Woke Up Wondering

I woke up this morning, and wondered if one of the homies got gunned down by the foo's on the other side. I was thinking of what I should do today and what the day would bring for me, and the homie Goofy.

Then I think about baby mama and what she thinks about baby daddy being locked up. And the baby she got in her womb is mine. Then I thank God for one more day of life.

-Juicy Loo B5

From The Beat: Do you think it's a responsible thing to do to bring children into the world when you can't take care of them? Wouldn't a responsible man take precautions to prevent pregnancy, especially if he's not going to be there for the child? Children require care and attention 24/7, so how will you handle that responsibility when you get out of here?

Typical Day

I woke up this morning and I was feeling alright because you can't feel too good being locked up.

I woke up and brushed my teeth, showered and from there is crew work and thinking about my wifey.

-Bear Weezy B2

From The Beat: Do you think you will be feeling better than alright when you are ready to leave from here and go somewhere else? How does thinking about your wifey help you get through the day? What else helps you get through all those hours in the Hall?

Come to think about it, it wasn't worth it because you the one here without freedom

Short Day

I woke up this morning and took a shower, then I washed my face. I ate breakfast , and after I did that I went to school and learned something. That the end of my day.

-Ivan B4

From The Beat: Is this all you did all day? Did you read anything, speak to anyone, play any games, eat lunch and dinner? Where are the details?

Bad Dream

I woke up early this morning in shock. I had a disturbing dream. I dreamt that I was getting shot at.

At first I was just running. Then I ended up in the hospital. I tried to get up again but my legs gave out. So I just gave up, and once I did, I woke up.

-Sideshow B5

From The Beat: Have you ever been shot at in real life? Was this a dream about the past, or do you fear it's about the future? What do you think it means that everything turned out all right when you gave up?

At first I was just running. Then I ended up in the hospital.

I Woke Up

I woke up this morning, feeling...? I woke up this morning...

I don't know how to explain it, but some of y'all probably will think it's strange 'cause when I woke up, I felt like I was at home. Why? Because I stay stress free.

I got no problems to stoop down to the level of these troubled teens. Got it good in here. I can get mostly everything I see.

If you be locked up for a minute like me, you'll see. Seeing the same faces every day.

But I ain't feelin' so good that y'all think I would stay. This my home for now, until that day comes I'll go back home and wake up in the morning doing my own.

-Jd B5

From The Beat: Are you saying the longer you stay in the Hall, the easier it gets? Is this why people come back over and over again? If you woke up in the morning in your own bed, how would you feel? How can you stay stress-free? If you meet some stress on the outs, how will you handle it?

Last Night

Last night before I went to sleep, I felt like someone was looking at me through my screen!

-Spooked GU

From The Beat: That's a trip. Do you think it was a spirit, or do you think it was something in your mind?

"I Woke Up This Morning And. . ."

Damn

I woke up this morning feeling like, "Damn! I'm still in this box! When is this group home coming to get me?" So I stretched and waited for staff to come get me for my shower.

-Keezy B1

From The Beat: Don't you get tired of living your life like this? What is it going to take to keep you free? How badly do you want to take a shower when you want to, and not when they want you to? Enough not to come back?

Missin' My Family

I woke up this morning and, well, I miss my family. I want to get out of here. No one likes this place. Why can't I go back into time, so I won't be in this?

When I get out I'm going to my family, if you knew how much I love my family.

-Ricky B1

From The Beat: If you could go back in time, what would be different? Would you go back and not do what you did, or would you do it a different way, so that you wouldn't get caught? Will you remember how much you missed your family when you were in here so that you won't ever come back?

Morning Showers

Man, I woke up this morning and said, "Man, it's 6:00 in the morning! He must be psycho! Is he on rocks talking about taking a shower?" Man!

-Newt Capone B4

From The Beat: By the time you actually get under the shower, are you awake, or are you still half dreaming?

Still Here

I woke up this morning and realized that I was still in the halls and I got sad. I'm just hoping to go home right now. I'm waiting for my interview for a group home.

But I think I'm not going to go, 'cause I'm making some stupid decisions, like fighting and talking shhh, and that is going to mess my group home up.

I like to say what's up and take care.

-Malo B1

From the Beat: So where do you want to end up, and what is your plan for getting there? If you had control of your own case what would you do? If you know the way you are acting in The Halls will keep you from getting out, why do you keep doing it? If you can't control yourself when you know the consequences will be immediate, how will you control yourself when no one is checking you but you?

Bye-Bye

I woke up, this mornin' a lil' annoyed, and it's not 'cause I have to wake up to the same ol' stuff every day. It's not 'cause I don't like these people in here.

It's 'cause I know that I'm getting out of here in two days.

-Rabbit B4

From The Beat: What can we say except congratulations, and STAY OUT!

I Got Good News Today!

I woke up this morning and felt frustrated. I feel like that mostly every day I wake up and do the same routine every day. I'm tired of it. I hate waking up at 6 AM to take a shower; I still be hella sleepy. I don't get no kind of sleep while I'm in here, that's why I be having bad days in here. And on top of that, I don't know when I'm leaving.

So now the afternoon comes along and my PO comes to my door and tells me he got some news for me. I'm like, what? He tells me I'm 'a be leaving next week fo-sho! I was so happy with a permanent smile on my face, fa-real!

So now I know tomorrow morning I'm 'a wake up with a smile on my face!

-Jazze GU

From The Beat: Yippee! We're so happy you're finally getting the chance to start your time. We hope you'll keep your good attitude while you're in Colorado and will come back with a high school diploma and the desire to keep yourself on a positive tip. We hope you'll write us, too and let us all know how you're doing.

Today I Did...

I woke up this morning and I went to brush my teeth. It was 7:00. I didn't want to go to YTEC, but I have to. I didn't take a shower because I thought I might come to school too late. I grabbed some food and asked my brother for a ride. He was still sleeping.

I called up a friend and we was going to take the bus to school. When I was putting on my shoes, one of my friends rang my doorbell and asked me if I need a ride to school. I said alright and I called Christine and told her I got a ride.

Later on I hopped in the car and picked her up. He drove us to Arco and we bought a pack of Newports for the ride. I let her hold the pack. We got to school on time and from there I was just doing my program.

-Phu Guy YTEC

From The Beat: What does your daily program at YTEC look like? Do you like the way YTEC operates? What do you hope to take with you from YTEC when you graduate? (Did anyone notice that you didn't take a shower...)

Wake Up, Little Girls

You little girls need to slow down
My people's know when I get out it's finsta go down
Now look, you little girls need to slow down
Up in the morning in they guts they know it's about to go down
We poppin' pills and getting drunk, it's 'bout to go down
Look you little girls going stupid out there
It's crazy
At a young age y'all making babies
Now it's a cold game, yo' baby's daddy missin', it's shady
An' you ain't helping yo' self
Now, you must be out yo' mind if you ain't helping yo' self
Look, I told you same, now it's all on you.

-Cecil B4

From The Beat: You're right to be concerned about young girls having babies, but some of your advice should be directed at young boys, too. After all, it requires both to make a baby... So maybe what you're saying is that everyone has to be more responsible. That's something we wholeheartedly agree with.

Happy

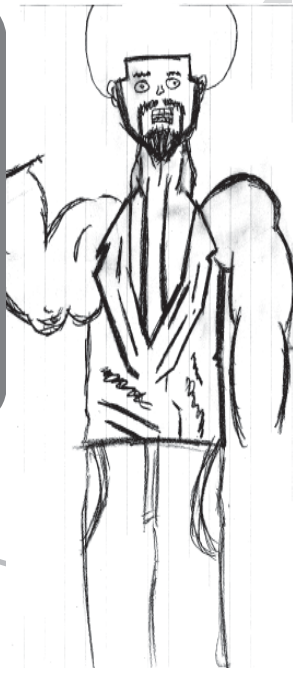
I woke up this morning with a sore throat. I ironed my clothes and took a shower, washed my face, brushed my teeth. I combed my hair and put on my clothes, got ready for school and left.

I got to school, signed in, talked to Will. I went to check in and had an excellent day at school. I did my work and had little conflicts at school.

I will be graduating from high school in twelve days. I am so happy this is coming up soon. Hey Beat, maybe you can hook me up with a job.

-Keneisha YTEC

From The Beat: Congratulations on your graduation, Keneisha! We're truly proud of you. How have you learned how to deal with school conflicts in a manner not detrimental to yourself or others? What's next after graduation from school, and YTEC? The Beat can always use workers, but The Beat can't always pay workers. So, if you're truly interested, pay us a visit and fill out an application.



Waking Up

I woke up this morning and was okay because I had court and I went to court and they said that I can go home if YTEC accepts me back I can go home.

-Big Body GU

From The Beat: Congratulations! We hope it works out and you work the program.

Reality Check

I woke up this morning and I felt very angry because I had to use the bathroom and couldn't 'cause my door was locked. I was in prison.

-Anthony B1

From The Beat: What are you going to do to make sure you don't wake up in that same predicament in the future?

"I Woke Up This Morning And. . ."

Not At Home

I woke up this morning thinking that I was at home, but damn another day at this boring-ass place. This place is like shhh. I rather be in my hometown East Palo Alto then this place. That's how I felt when I woke up this morning.

-T

From The Beat: What's it going to take for you to make sure that the next time you return home, you don't give it up for this place (or the next level) again?

The People In My Dream

I woke up this morning and I realized that I was in the Juvy of San Mateo.

I was happy because I thought I was at my house sleeping in my warm bed and watching TV and going to my own kitchen getting my Coke and my piece of bread and taking a bath. Getting ready ironing my clothes and putting on lotion and my cologne, going to school checking out the girls, talking to them and getting their phone numbers, and going to class and learning, then going to lunch with my friends, eating a large Domino's pizza. Then I went to soccer practice and I was scoring a lot of goals, then I went home and took a shower and called some girls to go to the mall, and I was at the mall and I went to the theater. I was watching a movie called "Jerry" going crazy in jail.

It was interesting and I went home and I got on my boxers and I was going to sleep and I woke up I was confused, because I heard a strong voice. It was staff. I was just dreaming, but I was happy because I saw people in my dream that I can't see in here.

-Abel

From The Beat: You manage to have an amazingly positive attitude about the dream you had and about the reality of your incarceration. How are you able to remain so upbeat? How do you plan on staying out the next time around, so that everything you wrote about can be a description of a real day instead of a description of the dream you have at night?

Woke Up Wishing

I woke up this morning and wished I was home, but it's not going to happen.

-Steven

From The Beat: Do you mean it's never going to happen, or it's going to be a minute before it happens? What are you doing to prepare yourself for freedom?

I Woke Up

I woke up this morning and took a look around and said to myself, what am I doin' to my family? I know they be hurtin' but I keep doin' my thug thang, because that's the way I am. All I know is the streets: bangin', slangin', all that, it's nothing new, feel me. One love.

-Young Guis

From The Beat: If you are aware of what you're doin' to your family, how can you continue to do the same thing? It's clear that you know more than just the streets; you know love for your family.

This Morning

I woke up this morning to some Ice Cube bumpin' from the speakers. I just layed on my bunk until Strib opened my door so I can take a head call.

Within that time I just thought about a few things, mostly about trying to go back to bed. But the other thoughts I had were wondering if I was going to get a letter from my girl today, and trying to figure out if the staff mailed my letter last night when my girl would get it.

I was trying to remember the dream I had last night but I couldn't. My thoughts were also this weekend coming up if I was going to be a 2 step. I also tried to figure out the staff's schedule so I could know who was working today.

That's about it. I talked to my roommate a little about it, if he thought he was going to camp, that's about it.

-Kurupt

From The Beat: Don't you hate it when you try to remember a dream and just slips farther and farther from memory? Is every morning the same in the Hall, or are there variations? When you get back into your own bed, how late do you think you want to sleep?

The Keys

I woke up this morning and I heard the keys, and my door opened. Then I got up and put on my pants. After that, I went to the bathroom to brush my teeth.

Then I took it down, waited for a few minutes and here came breakfast. The muffins were good but that's all. Took it down again and waited.

Then I heard the keys, so they opened my door for school. Went to two classes already, now it's tha best class, The Beat Within workshop.

So that's how my day has gone so far, and hopefully the rest goes good.

-Funk-E

From The Beat: It gives us a warm feeling to read that The Beat is the best class of the day. What else do you like in school? Is there anything you wish you were studying that you can't study in the Hall? Is every day the same, or are some days better than others?

This morning

I woke up this morning and all I do is think about my homie that just passed away. I can't get him out of my head. It's like everything I do reminds me of him, 'specially 'cause I was always riding with him.

Espero que stes descansando en paz (I hope you are resting in peace). All the homies got respect for you and we wish this would have never happened. Just remember you will always be in my heart. Much love and respect.

-Smokey

From The Beat: We can feel your pain, and we can only imagine how his family feels. The tragedy of a young life lost to violence that we can't see as anything but senseless is almost unspeakable. How much respect do you have for your dead homie? Is it enough to learn that the game isn't worth the price that he paid, or will you put on the blinders and follow him off the cliff?

Cranky

I woke up this morning and I was really cranky. I didn't want to wake up; I was having a good ass dream, and next thing I know I open my eyes and I'm in this stupid place.

-Blanca

From The Beat: Not even dreams provide a satisfying escape from the Hall, 'cause you still have to wake up to face reality. What'll it take for you to stay back on the outs, where dreams end with the sunshine of new, free days?

"Wake Up!"

I woke up this morning and my boy from LA told me he was flyin' up today.

I smoked a Newport and went to school. After school, I met up with my boy, and we picked up a couple of my other boys. We started drinkin'. When the sun went down we went to a party.

I was at the front door and it opened up. I woke up to "Wake up! Y'all got 5 minutes!" Damn! I can't wait to I go home.

-Jb Dope

From The Beat: Well, at least it started out as a sweet dream. Now, what do you have to do to make this dream a reality?

The World, Forget It

I woke up this morning and I felt hella sick, sick of seeing these faces, sick of being hated, sick of being talked about.

Woke up this morning hatin' my life, as if now thinkin' about what I'ma do in my life, and how I'ma do it. Woke up this morning thinking, "Forget the world!" because there ain't no peace. Friends act in my face, but they someone's main piece, their token, I guess, in their hatred against me.

Suckas lie, sell wolfets 'bout me. Why? Now I got a gang of folks hatin'. They should just stick to getting' high 'cause they can't even tell when they patna is lying.

Woke up this morning coughin' and chokin'. My head was hella steamin'. I felt like getting up an' start beamin'.

I woke up this mornin' and I felt like sreamin'.

-Fo'Thirty

From The Beat: We know the feeling of waking up feeling like you want to scream, and we don't like the feeling. When you feel like that, what do you do? How can you "scream" without anyone hearing you? What are the lies that people are telling about you? What can you do to set people straight?

I woke up this mornin' and I felt like sreamin'.

"An Apology"

This Is My "Sorry" For 2001

I owe my ninja Vince an apology for 2001 because I used to get his ass in trouble all the time.

I remember this one time I ran away from home for the first time, and Vince went out there to look for me. He got me a jacket 'cause I was cold, and he waited for me to calm down. I never did, so he stayed with me till the next day and he called my mom up to tell her I'm safe and everything so my mom came and got me.

Then I remember the day Ronald and I broke up and Vince stayed on the phone with me all night to hear me cry and talk to me about hella stuff. I really can't say anything to describe it but thank you and for all you've taught me. Now I know to "trust no ninja" 'cause you taught me the real game to these women!

Sorry Vince for everything I've put you through! Rest In Peace! Luv ya.

Baby Girl YTEC

From The Beat: Sounds like a good friend. How did Vince die? Did his death teach you anything? What do you think Vince would want you to be doing with your life right now? Could you be just as good a friend to someone as he was to you?

A Better Person

In life there is a lot of people I want to apologize to for some stupid things that I done in life to them. Fighting people and cursing them out. I would want to apologize to all them people for the hate that was in my life at the time, 'cause now my life has changed. I am a better person in life.

-Geezy B4

From The Beat: We are happy to read that your life has changed and that you're a better person now. How did that change come about? What advice could you give to others to undergo the same change?

I Apologize

I owe an apology to my moms and pops 'cause I know they're suffering for what I go through. I don't want to see my parents coming in these halls visiting me, stressing 'bout me.

-A-Pon B2

From The Beat: How will you make sure that they never have to visit you in the Hall again? What is going to be different in your life?

They Owe Me An Apology

Now ya know haters be everywhere. And some just don't get enough.

The way I see it, ninjas be on your back just talking hella shhh about you, but they not about they own shhh. See things like that gets me hella heated. It just never stops, feel me. Even though I'm telling them straight up, "Don't speak about it, be about it," they just don't understand.

So fa'real, all I got to say is people like that should just stop running they mouth knowing they cant do nothing and just apologize. That's what they need to do. Come on now it's not that hard to man up about yo' shhh if that's really on that level. Ninjas like that ain't nothing. feel me! Just a waste of yo' time.

And off top, Christine don't play. I'm down for my shhh all day every day. So feel me, that tells ya that ya need to get on my level, and come correct before you speak, feel me. Until then, don't think you hella sick, ready to throw it down because really, when it comes down to it, you're there looking dumb. That's what I call quick to back down.

-Christine YTEC

From The Beat: What are you down for? Why are you so worried about these other people? What impact do all these people have on your life? If these people ain't shhh, why even worry about what they are saying? It's easy to focus on the problems you have with others while ignoring your own. Who do you owe an apology to?

Regrets

I don't think that I have apologized for everything that I have done to people every time. But for some reason, I feel that I have not apologized to one person and I have a feeling in myself like I regret it that I didn't do it. There has been a couple of times where I didn't even have to do it, but I said I'm sorry so it would make situations better.

-Rodrigo YTEC

From The Beat: It's a sign of your decent heart (and good sense) that you have apologized for things you didn't do just to smooth the waters. But what is keeping you from saying you're sorry to that one person?

I never want my sister or brother to come to this place.

Apology

My apology is for my family, for me being in this place and for not being home with my family. I wish I could be home right now.

My court day is on Wednesday, and I wish I could get out on Thursday or Friday. I would never come back to this place ever again. And I never want my sister or brother to come to this place.

-Hajji B1

From The Beat: What would you be doing if you were at home right now? How are you going to show your little sister and brother the way to stay out of the halls?

Too Much Pride

For some reason, it is hard for some people to apologize because they have to keep their pride in the way. Like you want to say sorry but you can't. Sometimes people say their sorry and don't really mean it. Like they're saying it to get it out of the way and to get it over with. I hate them fake ass apologies.

-R.Jae YTEC

From The Beat: Have you ever given an apology that wasn't genuine? Do you feel you owe anyone an apology? Why do you think some people tell others what they want to hear instead of what's real? Do you find it easy to apologize? Who is the last person you said you were sorry to? When?

I Forgive

I forgive all dat did me wrong, feel me. We've been cool for like ten years, and I can't be mad forever. So, I forgive you.

But I'll never forget what you did, and this the last time I'm gong to mention this incident. So stay up, stay strong, and learn right from wrong.

-Afro B4

From The Beat: How does it make you feel to forgive someone who has injured you? We don't know what the injury was, but we do know that people who can forgive find a weight lifted off them. Is that your experience?

"Weekly Writings"

Hoping

Well today's topic is not really that easy to talk about, so I'm going to talk about something else.

By the time this Beat comes out, I'm going to find out if I'm going to be going home or staying in some kind of program.

Today is the 18th. By the time this comes out, it's going to be the 1st and I might be out hopefully.

-Edwin B5

From The Beat: Don't keep us on pins and needles — what happened? We hope that whatever the outcome, you'll be able to step up to the plate and do what you need to do to stay out of here.

They Make Us Think

I think we as people do things that we don't mean to do, but when we do it, it be too late to make a change. So someone make it for us by locking us up and making us do what they want us to do. They tell us when to go sleep and wake up and lock us up in a room and make us think about what we did.

-Lil' Dakota

From The Beat: Does this system work to make you think about what you did? Can you think of other things the society might do to help you not do the things you shouldn't do without having to wait for you to do them, and then locking you up for it? How is it that you do things you don't mean to do?

Don't Do Drugs

I don't smoke weed or drank 'cause it makes me wild out. I always end up in here, and that's why I'm trying to quit doing that stuff.

-Oso B5

From The Beat: It's not hard to give those things up when you're locked up, but how are you going to resist the many temptations that come your way when you're on the street?

Dirt Talker

People in the Hall day in and day out talk dirt every day. I think they talk this stuff because I think they know I will pull they card. They talk shhh because they are scared in they soul.

But like the adults always say to me about people that talk dirt, "They are scared and they can't fight for nothing!"

-R B4

From The Beat: Are you saying that people who talk can't act, and people who act don't talk? We're not sure how true that is, but the one thing we think is true is that a lot of people who put on a tough front do it out of fear.

"An Apology"

The Question And The Answer

I owe an apology to my boyfriend. Dear baby, I'm sorry for putting you through hard times with me. I know I messed up by not listening to you when you told me to be good and not get in trouble. I appreciate everything — you been there for me, forgave me, because if it's another guy they would have already have left me and knowing that I have you and you have me and we been with each other almost five years on and off. I will never cheat on you baby.

I know the guys that are reading this are saying "That's what they all say," but with me it's different because I'm in love with him and he's in love with me. So thank you baby for accepting my apology. We both been thick and thin with each other and I love you even though we're both in the Hall doing our time, but when you get out I'll still be waiting for you like last time you got out. I love you.

Love is the question; love is the answer.

-Kymberly

From The Beat: We usually shy away from printing love pieces, but we're making an exception because you're talking about more than just your love for your man — you also acknowledge the mistakes you've made and the support you've received. Is it possible that the two of you can support each other in your struggle to stay free of the system when you return to the outs?

For Being Stupid

What's up Beat? Yeah, I owe an apology to my mom for being stupid and getting locked up.

I mean I hate when she comes and visits me, and I hate to see her cry. I mean every time she cries it makes me want to cry, and it gets me mad like I want to run away from this place. It makes me want to go crazy, but I know I can control myself because that's how my mom raised me.

I mean if I had my dad in my life I know I would not be in Hillcrest Juvenile Hall. I mean I'm like the only boy on my mom's side of the family that doesn't have a dad and the only boy on my mom's side that only been locked up. I'm like the youngest boy in the family and the boy that's been locked up. That's why I owe my mom an apology.

This is what I got to say: I'm sorry mama for all the stupid things I did in life, but I just want to thank God for keeping the family together. I'm sorry mama I love you. Late, love your favorite son T.

-T

From The Beat: We feel your apology, and we're sure that your mother would as well. Have you ever shared the words you just wrote with her? What's going to keep you from being stupid the next time around? How are you going to make sure that your mom's tears are replaced by smiles? If you were to meet your dad, what would you say to him?

Myself and My Familia

First of all I would erase the vision and memory in my mind that I got locked up. I would erase all of what's happening to me, because I feel sad about it, and my family is very hurt over it and worried as well. They're worried because I might get hurt, but I'm keeping it cool in here so I could get out soon.

I think I owe my whole family an apology. I don't really think no one owes me an apology. I feel sorry for myself and my familia.

-Eriberto

From The Beat: We understand why you'd want to erase this painful episode from your memory, but is there anything positive to be learned from it? Have you realized how much your family means to you because you've been separated from them? Will the bitterness of this experience be enough to keep you out in the free world for good next time around?

An Apology For Moms

I think I owe an apology to my moms because I put her through a lot of stress — lots of angry moments and moments that I hurt her, feeling really bad that she cried all the time.

I love my mom. I'm sorry for what I put her through.

-Kasper

From The Beat: You're going to be out in a matter of days — how can you show her how sorry you are for the pain you've caused her? The best apology might be to make sure you don't put her through any of this ever again.

POs and judges shouldn't put people away if they don't really know them.

One Apology

I owe one person an apology, and two people owe me an apology.

First off, I owe my mom and my family an apology for putting them through all the stuff I put them through, like me coming in here, not going to school and all the other bad things I put them through. I'm very sorry for all my bad things I did.

The two people that owe me an apology is my PO and the Judge. They don't have the right to put me away for almost a year. They shouldn't do that because they don't know me and they don't know who I am.

So I'ma end it like this: POs and judges shouldn't put people away if they don't really know them.

-Funk-E

From The Beat: You may be right that POs and Judges shouldn't put people away without getting to know them, but you are wrong when you say they don't have the right to do it. The law gives them the right — and then you give them power over you by breaking the law. If you made a list with the things POs and Judges shouldn't do on one side, and what you and your homies shouldn't do on the other, what would it look like?

Apology

If there is anyone that I would apologize to, it would be my mom, dad, my older sister and my two little brothers. The reason that I say that is because throughout these past five years I have put them through a lot of stuff. I just want to let them know I'm sorry, and that I love them.

-Lil' D

From The Beat: To be truly sorry is more than just words, Lil' D. How do you plan to demonstrate your sorrow when you are free to make your own choices again?

I Don't Know Where To Start

Man, talkin' bout apologies — shhh, I don't even know where to start. I've hurt, done people wrong all along that my list is so long. But the main important people off the top of my head would be my momma, 'cause I've put her through hell and back.

-Blanca

From The Beat: How can you start to make it up to your mom? How can you turn the hell you've put her through into a distant memory? While you're making it up to her, how can you avoid adding to the list of folk you've done wrong?

"An Apology"

Apology To Moms

Of course I owe my moms an apology for them working hard and wanting me to go to school, but me cutting probably hurt her.

-Larry

From The Beat: How can you motivate yourself to further your education? This can be the key to your freedom.

I'm Sorry Mom

i feel sorry for my mom
that i'm up in here
she started crying
'cause she thought
that i was not gonna be
safe up in here
but i know what i have done
and i'm sorry for it
and i won't do it again
so i owe my mom
an apology

-William

From The Beat: Look closely at what you did, and at all the things that led up to it. Now be sure you don't even get close to it again.

They Owe Me

Man, I do not owe no one an apology. The police owe me an apology for having me in here for some shhh I did not do, man. Shhh is not right, trying to put that shhh on me. So I want a damn apology.

-R-Bone

From The Beat: They must have done you dirty. Hope it works out. You make it sound like you've never done any dirt and don't owe anyone an apology. How about your loved ones? Some people go through life thinking people owe them and later find out that they owed a good life to themselves. We hope you won't go out like that.

Ashamed & Sorry

The one person I owe an apology to, is myself. I've messed up a lot of times, and I'm often ashamed of myself for that.

I made my moms unhappy with me, and I made the rest of my family unhappy, too. I've disappointed them a lot — and they've kept giving me chances! So I guess I owe them an apology, too.

That's why I'm ashamed, and I wish I'd never made some of the stupid decisions that I've made. But all I can do, is learn from my mistakes and move on with my life. Until that move has been made, I apologize to myself and my moms and my family.

-Rich

From The Beat: In the recovery movement, you are asked to make a list of all those to whom you owe amends (which may start with an apology but that's not the end). Many people forget to put themselves on at all, when they should probably be the first name they call. You can't change the past, but you can make changes now and make them will last.

Apologies to My Family

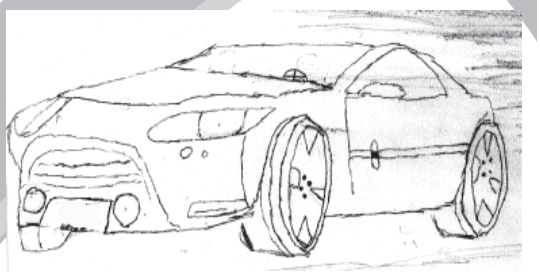
What up, Beat! I want to apologize to my family. The reason I think I owe them an apology, is because I'm locked up and I'm not with them.

I left my little brother, my mother and everyone else. Now my mom has to waste her Wednesday and Saturday or Sunday, when she could be doing something more important than coming here to visit me.

Well, that's it. I'll write again next week.

-Abo

From The Beat: Your mother clearly feels there's nothing more important on a Wednesday or a weekend, than to come visit you. Consider it an investment of faith, or consider it a debt you need to repay when you get out — but don't pay it with that tainted money. Get yourself a job to make your money and start doing what you should, so your little brother can see you doing good!



Apology To My Little Brother

I owe my little brother an apology.

I wasn't being a good big brother. I wasn't there for him, showing him shhh that he don't need to see for his age. But all I hope he can do is to forgive me, the time I have committed to him.

-Chris

From The Beat: You can learn how to help each other out in a good way. He doesn't need to follow in your footsteps and the only way you can help prevent this from happening is walking a different path. Is your life, freedom and loved ones worth dropping your scandalous ways?

Apology To My Family

I really owe my whole family a big apology for all the stress I put them through but I think I owe my mom, my dad, my future wife and my daughter because me being locked up must hurt them a lot because I know it's tearing me up inside.

I know for a fact that my future wife and my daughter needs me a lot right now. I just pray day and night that I get out on my next court day and I would like to say sorry to my future wife, daughter, dad and mom.

I would like to say I love you all and hopefully I'll be home soon.

-Matt

From The Beat: It's okay to feel regret and then move from this feeling. Move into action. If you get everything together, you will have many years to spend with them. This loss time with them will seem short in comparison. Look to the future when you hurt a lot.

I Apologize

to my mom
because i made
a mistake
and went
to jail for it
but this is
my first case
and i will be
gettin' out
in three days

-Bobby

From The Beat: You owe amends to your mom, and saying you're sorry is just a part. Stop those mistakes before they start, or you'll break both your own and your mother's hearts.

Apology To My Mother

Que honda? Soy Droopy de Hayward. I want to apologize to my mother.

The reason I want to apologize is because of what I put her through. She is the one that has been there for me ever since I could remember and there have been times when I don't recognize that. So, sorry, Jefo. You're the only one that has been to all of my trials, the one that has visited me every chance you get, and the one that has been, and always be there for me emotionally and physically. So I sorry for putting you through hell, but I'm gonna make it up to you somehow, but the thing I'll tell you in writing and in person is sorry I'm sorry Jefo.

-Droopy

From The Beat: Droopy, if you are truly sorry for your actions, and want to make it up, you can't continue with the same behavior. Right? So, what are you gunna do? Your mother has been there for you; it's your turn to be there for her. Ya' think?

Apology Note

I would tell my mother that I'm sorry for all of the stress that I put on her with my case an' all the money she spent on a lawyer. I would ask her to forgive me, tell her that I know I messed up, and when I get out I'm goin' to try my best to stay out of trouble.

-Bo

From The Beat: Nice that you realize how your actions affect others. How can you make a firm decision to stay out of trouble instead of just "trying" your best?

To My Mother, Who I Owe An Apology To

Today is May 18th, 2004 and it is going to be two months since I've been locked up. On May 12th, 2004, I had court and I saw my moms. When I saw her, I wanted to give her a hug so bad, but I couldn't. So now that I'm in the Hall, wishing that I had my moms to come and get me, she won't. Why? Because, I put her through so much shhh.

No matter what, I will always love my moms. So, moms I'm sorry for all the shhh I put you through. And I love you, even though you chose to put me in a placement. Just know, I will always love you.

I know the choice you made is for my own good. So to all my familia, take care.

-Erika

From The Beat: Erika, you do owe your mom an apology. How do you plan to apologize? How can you show her that you've changed? If you were in her shoes, what would you do? How would you feel? You are a sweet girl; we would love to see you patch things up with your mom. Sometimes all it takes is a little time and a lot of love.

Apology?

Yes, there is a lot of people I owe an apology to.

One of the main people I owe an apology is my mother. I owe her an apology for all the pain and heartache I've put her through these last couple years.

The other people I owe an apology is the rest of my family and my female. The rest of my family, because I've never really got a chance to spend quality time with my brother and sisters. And to my female, I didn't even get a chance to go to the prom with her.

Someone once said; "if somebody slap your mom, her face will heal. But, if you keep going back and forth to jail your hurting her emotionally and it may not heal."

-Lil' Aj

From The Beat: Have you told these people how you feel? That's a start. The sooner you start the healing, the sooner they will heal, right? You are going to have to make sacrifices in your life, to make it up for your mistakes. What are you prepared to do?

"An Apology"

I Apologize To My Mom

Mom,
I apologize for doing all the things I have done.
I apologize for having a bad attitude.
I apologize for having anger outbursts.
I apologize for being smart and not listening.
I apologize for everything I've done and everything I do.
I apologize for hurting you mentally.
But mom, I love you.
You are my heart and I'm sorry.
Please forgive me.

-So Sorry

From The Beat: Is this the first time you've told you mom this? How do you think she will respond? Do you show her that you're sorry with your actions? It's one thing to be forgiven for your past mistakes but, it's another, to learn from your mistakes and compensate for them. Not only should you share this with her, but also you should show her that you're sorry.

An Apology

I owe an apology to my lady and my Jefa, what I mean is I have hurted them so much that I feel the pain they feel, and it hurts because they mean so much to me.

They both have always been there for me and I think I should at least try my best to make both of them happy. Both of them make me feel great, I care so much for them, that I promise to change for the better and treat them how they are supposed to be treated, I will show them that it comes from the heart and I hope they can accept my apology. I'm sorry mija, also Jefita te quiero mucho, y las extrano perdoname.

-Sanchez

From The Beat: How are you going to do your best to make them happy? What is your best? Do you have a plan? We think an apology is a great start, what's next?

Apology

My Apology goes out for two people, my mom & friend.
I apologize to my mom for all the things I've ever done that hurt her.
I apologize for not caring when I should of.
I apologize for getting drunk and not coming home until the sun rises.
I apologize for not listening to her.
I really apologize for hurting her.
I apologize to my friend (Rico) for playing childish games.
I apologize for making you think something that's nothing.
I apologize for being scared to be down.
I apologize.
But, I don't apologize about the love for both of you.
I love ya'll

-D-Janai

From The Beat: Your love for these two people is really clear in your apologies. The best way to make it up to them is not only tell them, but to show them. What do you think?

Paid Off

the only person i think
i owe an apology to
is my mom
'cause she tried her best
to make me a good kid
but in return i turned
into a monster in the making
i sold drugs
smoked weed
and got my thizz on
robbed and stole
i'm gon' apologize
and change my life
to make her feel
that her hard work
of raising a man
without a father
paid off

-Lil' Lacey

From The Beat: Do it for your mom or do it for yourself, 'cause you don't need to be a monster to make your wealth — just the opposite. Now that you've started the change, don't stop wit' it!

Need An Apology

I think that the person that needs an apology is my mother, father and grams and lil' sister and lil' bro because they have always been there for me.

I used to act like a lil' fool, going out doing stuff I shouldn't have done. But, now I sit down in my room thinking of the things we should have done together as a family, spend my time with a family and not in the Hall.

Thinking of all these things that I never felt in the outs until I came in here. Because all I could do is think of all the things I done in the outs. I can't even believe it, that this lil' thug girl done more shhh then a real thug.

I feel bad for making my mother suffer like this, for me being here. Lock up with no shoulder to cry on, until I get a visit. And thank God for having my mother next to me all the time.

If I see you, I wish it would be at home and nowhere else, but with you, at home.

-Marilyn

From The Beat: What was it that made you realize what's important in your life? What was it about the time you've spent in the Hall? How can you make it up to these people? How are you going to change? When you are at home, how are you going to feel? How are you going to make it up to your family?

"Disturbing Mental Images"

The Image

The image that is always going to stay in my mind is, the image of seeing my O.G. potna getting killed in front of my face.

All I remember was "pop! pop! pop!", and seeing my potna, Marv, shot on the ground. He got shot three times, once in his head and twice in his stomach. I was in shock because it happened so quick. I didn't know what to do so I just saw the car fled the scene hella fast.

One reason why this image is going to stay with me forever is because Marv and my brother and me used to start up hella sideshows, kick it, they use to smoke, but not me. That's an image that will be in my mind forever.

He lost his life over an eighth of weed ($50 dollars). That's some scandalous stuff right there for you.

-Lil' Beto

From The Beat: Damn! Fifty dollars? That ain't shhh. Life is too precious. How did this make you feel? Were you angry, sad, frustrated? Do you remember? Do you feel different about it now? How do you feel about your life, is there anything you can do to prevent this situation from happening again? Why does this kind of thing happen?

Revenge Is Disturbing

You wish but you can't do anything about it.

You get revenge to make yourself feel better and you feel like you did something about it.

The US is doing criminal acts by going in someone else's house, shooting at them and taking their stuff.

-Larry

From The Beat: Revenge and seeing the system do criminal acts are both very disturbing. How can you stop revenge in your life? You know when avenge someone, you are only adding to the number of hurt people, including your mom and their mom.

Disturbing Mental Images

Once before, when I was on the outs I went to a party with my cousin and we got into it, with some other dudes. So my cousin told the other dudes "We got problems!" and as soon as I heard him say that I knew something bad was about to happen.

My older cousin ran up on dude and shot 'em with the pistol, hit him six times in the chest, that guy died right in front of my face.

-Young M

From The Beat: Shhh! That's disturbing. Do you remember how you felt when that happened? How did you feel about your cousin? Do you think he did it out of self-defense, or did he take it to far? Were you scared? Were you scared of police or of your cousin? How do you feel about it now?

The US is doing criminal acts by going in someone else's house

Disturbing Mental Images

If I could go back into time, I would take back that sin of bustin' a dude in his chops. I had felt disrespect' because of what he was tryin' to tell me. But I was young an' hifey at the time.

I wasn't trying to hear what stranger on the streets were tryin' to tell me now. I felt that I was my own man but the drugs had me on the hype.

When I am bored in my cell I think about my life of sin, all of the beatin' that I gave, all those stolen cars that I strip'. It was fun at the time but now I see it as lucky because I didn't catch a case.

-B'z Bo

From The Beat: Now that you realize you were too hifey, how will you prevent from getting this way again when you get out? Is it staying away from certain drugs, people and friends? You may not have caught a case for some things but those things have a way of coming back to you. Don't be too surprised or angry when things don't go your way or someone steals from you. What did that stranger try telling you? Take care.

Most Disturbing Memory

I remember a while ago in like '99 when my mom, was married. It was right before my baby sister was born. Mom's was nine-months pregnant, she was due any day now.

However her so-called soul mate didn't agree on something she wanted to do, I'm not sure what it was 'cause it was a while ago... my time is up now so I have to finish next time.

-Lil' Vell

From The Beat: You never got to what happened. What happened? Don't forget to finish...

"Disturbing Mental Images"

Bouncin'

One disturbing mental image I've experienced was when my friend got shot right in front of me. We were out one night on the block, kicking it and a car crept up behind us and just started shooting at us. We ran but I looked back and my friend was on the floor, so I looked around and the car was gone.

I ran to him and I was like, "Are you all right?" But he wasn't talking back, so I gave him my chain with the cross, and I ran away because I heard the sirens. I felt guilty because in some way I felt I could've helped him.

-Mike YTEC

From The Beat: What does this tell you about life on The Block? Do you still hang on the block? Is your block worth losing your life over, or your friend's life? If you feel the need to hang with your homies from the block, do you think y'all could do it somewhere where there isn't the possibility of getting shot at? How do you think you could've helped your friend before the shooting happened?

Disturbing Mental

What is disturbing is being here and stressing out without a doubt. My mind is made up, I need strength to get back up and try again to be more able to strengthen myself to move and go farther and never stop and pay attention to my life.

God will help me and be able to be there for myself and try to be focused. War was my problem; I like violence. You have the right to remain silent when I come through. I'll do anything for anyone 'cause I'm gon' do the fool and be cool. Hell with being hifey, I'm somebody's wifey.

-Tiffany GU

From The Beat: You've been through so much that's disturbing, Tiffany, but as you know, you've survived. You do have the strength to move farther along in this life with God's help and your own will. Just focus your energy on you and forget about those who just want to bring you down.

Let's Get Free

A disturbing image that is in my head is when I walked into YGC for the first time. I saw a lot of black kids in there. It really hurts to see a lot of my people, brothers, and my homies locked up in the system.

-Young Skills YTEC

From The Beat: What do you think could get young people out of the system? Not just your people, but everybody? How are you going to keep yourself from coming back?

What I Feel About Da Streets

Man this game is like this: To some people if you ain't got a gun or you don't sell dope, people in the streets will look at you like you a sucka because you don't do ere'thing that da next man do.

I'm always on the same old shhh, didn't care about other people. Just like I said, forget about everybody else.

I thought about myself. Sometimes I regret that, but I rarely regret stuff, feel me? So the streets is always things to do, always 'bout my cash, if you know what I mean.

Also in the streets can't trust nobody. People will backstab. You can't even trust a cannon 'cause it might jam up. But I'm gon say to da young homies be easy to my sweet Tiffany. Be coo'. Love ya. Stay up 'cause it's always hataz that's gonna test you.

-Cudabeez B5

From The Beat: Are you doing anything with your time now to prepare yourself to make that money you want when you're on the outs again? Do you see yourself in a legit job, or do you plan to post again, and risk all this happening again?

A Close Call

Well first of all, what's up with The Beat Within writers and all? You know me, I'm doing cool.

But anyways, I done been in mental images and done seen mental images. One is I had got shot up not too long ago, I got shot in my arm, and I took one to the waist.

When I came up in here I was in a wheel chair. But you know I'm still living. They ain't no stopping me. I'm walking now, you feel me. De nada to a pimp. You got to feel me.

But I done had and seen stuff these kids ain't seen before 'cause it's real out here. My life is not a movie. To all my homies, we all we got.

-Cecil B4

From The Beat: How can you say, "They ain't no stopping me" just because you survived this shooting? If the bullet had been only inches in a different direction, you wouldn't be writing anything at all. Others would be writing their RIP to you. Wake up, Cecil. No one is promised another chance.

America: A Place Of Murder

I just want to say that it's really true about the murders, rapes, and prisoners in Iraq is getting abused by American soldiers. But what about people that is getting murdered in the ghetto?

I think it's more people on the streets of San Francisco getting murdered than the people in Iraq. Every time a soldier get killed in Iraq it be on national television, but when someone else get killed in the street they keep that shhh on the under. Nobody really care about the war that's goin' on, 'cause it's a war everywhere you go.

Police don't care either. They just be sittin' back watchin' us kill each other. Ain't nobody could stop the violence. That stuff is going to keep goin' and goin'. It's impossible to stop the violence.

I think the government should stop building prisons and start building schools so that everybody could get an education. Plus, they need to put some money in the projects to help out everybody that's poor.

Since they say America is a place to stay I think they be lying 'cause in America, it's a place of murder. There's a lot of people that's getting' killed, and it has a lot of poor people that's born in nothin' but violence. So for right now forget about a war. Brothas need to be worrying about people that's getting killed in the street.

-Jay Baby B5

From The Beat: So much of what you write is right on the money, Jay. But there are connections to the war in Iraq with the war on the streets. We have already spent more than 100 billion dollars (billion!!) to prosecute the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. At the same time, you point out that we're not building schools. That's just one of the things we're not providing to the people who pay the bills, the taxpayers. In Economics, you study the concept of "guns" or "butter."

Death Stays In My Head

I wish I could erase seein' my boy get shot nine times then die right in front of me. I didn't know who hit him. We just came out from a party and then I looked behind me and see him bleedin' saying, "I'm shot, I'm shot, get me some help." Then he collapses and dies.

After I seen that, I always see that image in my head. That was one of the worst times I had in my life. RIP Chuck.

-A-Pon B2

From The Beat: What a terrible thing to see. After this happened, did you begin to think you might need to associate yourself with different kinds of people? For all you know, you could've been hit by a ricocheting bullet. Has this event changed your life?

Stop The Madness

I wish that all the madness in the world would stop because it is making me lose a lot of people that I care about. From 2000 to 2004, I have lost over 8 people that I care about and about 5 people that I know, and I'm just scared because I don't know who I am going to lose next. I just want to stop the violence in the Bay Area.

STOP!

-Big Body GU

From The Beat: We feel you that and we're sure a lot of Beat readers will, too. So what can you do on a personal level to bring more peace to your community and less violence?

A Cop Killed My Brother

I have an image that my big brother died in a car crash. The car split in half. When he had got out the car, a cop was there and did not help.

My brother was walking toward him. Then the cop shot and he killed him.

-Spoon B4

From The Beat: This is a terrible mental picture to be carrying around, and we're sorry. Do you blame all cops for this murder, or just the one that did it?

A Brother Lost

Life is messed up. When you look around, you don't expect to see somebody dead in the street.

The boy was five years old, my brotha. A car was coming and it didn't stop. It just kept going and hit its target and got ghost.

It's a dirty game. One day I'm gon crap out.

-Newt B4

From The Beat: What a terrible image to carry around with you, NC. How old were you when this happened? Did they ever find the driver of the car? What happened? Yes, of course, one day you will crap out, because one day we will all crap out!

Pain In The Bay

In the last few weeks even though I been in YGC I have been hearing shhh about people getting killed. Like one of my buddies got killed before he went to his prom. Then today they buried him, and like two hours later, after the funeral, that dude who had just got hurt first cousin got killed today at Safeway.

Man, that is some shhh. Man, it's like if they can't get you then they go after your family. RIP Ray-Ray. RIP Scharod.

-Money Earnin' Mount Vernon B1

From The Beat: Thank you for your thoughts Vernon. What do you think it's going to take for all this madness on the streets to stop? When are we going to stop taking each others lives? Or will it only end when there's no one left alive?

Weekly Writings

The Game

The game ain't made for weak people who can't stand the pressure that the game provides. In the game it's rules and regulations you have to abide by. If you don't abide by the rules, then one thing is for sure and that is death. If you do abide, then the game will treat you righteous.

But the game ain't made for everyone. Even though the game ain't righteous, I still love it 'cause it got me to where I'm at. I know it don't sound right 'cause I'm in here, but I can care less what you think, 'cause I got some chips outside waitin' on me to come home to.

That's not the only reason why I love the game. It just did too much for me to explain. And knowin' The Beat, y'all would have a lot to say about my other reasons.

That's how I feel 'bout da game. If you don't like it, write me and ask me do I give a what, what, what.

-Young Fatz B5

From The Beat: We don't know why you have to end your piece with that kind of challenge; it only puts a wall up between you and your readers. Those chips you have waitin' for you have to be weighed against your current status as slave to the system. (What else can you call it when your every move is dictated by others?) Is there some point where what you love ("da game") is no longer worth the freedom that is taken from you? You say you love the game because it got you where you're at today. But since we know where you're at today, we can't imagine why you'd love being there.

Getting Money

Money is a powerful thing. That's why most of us are in jail, or not even here today.

But to tell you the true, I will do anything to get rich, from standin' on my block selling rocks, to puttin' a gun in a brotha's face, telling him to give it up.

Whoever made money must have been thinking of ruling the world. Money can make a man into a woman. Money is something that everybody wants, and before I die, I'm gone get a million. I don't how — maybe from the streets or maybe from a job. I don't think I'm going to get it from a job, because I'm going to keep it gangsta.

-Lil' Dakota B4

From The Beat: What do you need all that money for? What you're saying is that you're willing to risk your freedom for the money you think you'll get. Keep it gangsta, youngsta, and we'll be seeing a lot more of you in the Hall. (Or you'll be writing us from other, bigger, badder places...)

Why

Why am I in here? 'Cause I got caught slippin' on some bull wit' fake ninjas, and they turned into federales an' flipped the script.

How do I feel? I feel like I should know that some ninjas ain't gone be on the same level as me. So I messed up when I let myself get into it with tha police family. Now I'm payin' for it.

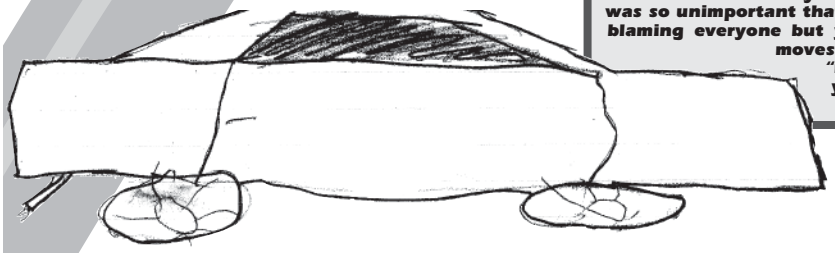
What would I change if I could? If I could change certain things, I would change the whole way I went about tha choices I made that got me in here. I would make all of the wrong moves I made into right moves.

Who would I call my ninjas? That's a nice question. I'm not gone write my ninjas' names on paper fa ya, or even speak it because that's what got me in here. Someone said my name on some bull. But, my ninjas, we know each other..

What's my plans for getting out? I plan on getting a cannabis card so I can smoke and don't have to trip off of my probation officer an' them piss tests. But I'm always keep it gutta.

-P- Gee-Zee B5

From The Beat: Are you saying you didn't do anything to get here, or that what you did was so unimportant that you shouldn't have to face this consequence? It sounds like you're blaming everyone but yourself for your misfortune. How would you make those wrong moves into right ones? As long as you stay committed to the game, those "right" moves will lead you right back here, or to the next level. Are you prepared for that? You'd better get prepared!



Bein' Black

Bein' black in this world is hard because it seem like we got no hope or no way to make it in this world. So we got to make a way out of no way, and the only way most of us make it is by selling drugs, doing drugs, and killing each other.

But bein' black don't always got to be bad, because half of us on TV or playing football on TV. But the most of us is locked up.

-Lil Dakota B5

From The Beat: There are many statistics that show that black people have a much harder time in this society than white people, but almost all those statistics are tied to income. In other words, it's hard enough being black, but the real "crime" is being poor. If we could bring some government money into the 'hood to provide training, recreation, jobs, etc., instead of spending it to kill Iraqis and build prisons, then maybe we could make a difference in many, many lives.

Interview With Leek (L), Fatz (F), And Cudabeez (CB)

L: This Leek, Man, sitting up in this bs unit thinking about too much of nothing, just all them females out there while I'm sitting up in here talking with the homies. Wonder what they think right now.

CB: Man, me, I sittin' in this Hall just sittin' waitin', just like the rest of my crimie homies. We just thuggin' out. But anyway, Lee, what you goin' do when you touch down, Lil' Bra?

L: Shhhh! Just go at life a different way. Go afta that chedda...

CB: I feel you, family, but me, I'm a go eighteen, dummy! Always 'bout my cash, too.

L: See, I was thinkin' those same thoughts when I first got took down. But like I said, got to change up.

CB: A ninja feelin' you on dat. But at the time I still got unfinished "bidness," nahmean? A ninja gon see and want my head took off, feel me Lil' Bra. You just like me. You too Fatz, you a super cat cutie.

L: I feel exactly what you sayin', but what about you, Fatz? Fatz? Ha, ha, ha!

F: I'm finsta stay in it 'cause too much blood been shed to jus' forget about everything. I love my thugs too much to jus' let their killer run loose. So I won't stop 'til we catch them all, ya know?

L: I feel that, playa, because marks be up in here talking about that they did. And I be thinking, "I know that mark ain't doing all that because it be people I ain't never seen out there." But I feel you, playa, because it's a couple of people I want to do.

CB: I can't stop thinkin' about that. I don't know why these young punks be talkin' out the side of dey neck like they just gangsta. Like dey claim sets dey know they don't push the hard line with. Some don't push a thang but dey lips.

F: That's all it is. I'm sittin' just thinkin' about my son. I don't want him in dis shhh 'cause it ain't for him, feel me, Leek?

L: How you know this ain't for him? You might not want him in it, but you can't keep him from it. Because if he want to be in it, he gon be in it.

CB: I know why I don't want my daughter in these streets, or none of my young gunnas. I'm gon. We will come back to ya next week. We gon.

-Leek, Fatz, Cudabeez B5

From The Beat: To be honest with you, we only got interested in your interview when you got to the subject of your son, Fatz, and then your daughter, Cudabeez. It seems to us you do a lot of thinking and talking about the game, about your chedder, about the streets, about youngsters running their mouths — all before you give a thought to your child! It seems like that's where you should be starting your thinking and your writing.

Dedicated To "A"

I have seen a sexy woman I still wanna meet. That sexy woman has a beautiful smile. I think sometimes she teases me, when I see her in the streets.

We going to rock some things. I hope it be great. Me and you fo' sho will have some heat. I miss you, Babe. I haven't heard from you girl. See you soon.

-Lucky Boy B4

From The Beat: We can't tell from this if you and this girl are already a couple, or if you are just hoping this happens in the future. Besides being sexy, what makes this girl so special?

It Won't Be Forever

I wish I was free right now because doing time is getting to me. But it's nothing because I know what I did and didn't do. I'm not tripping.

It's just that this 707 got me thinking about my life. I know I got to sit four more months to see if they go send me or not. I never did this much time before so you know how I feel.

But it's nothing. They can't hold me forever, you feel me.

-Young Dakota B4

From The Beat: We don't know how we would handle the stress of imprisonment, whatever else was going on. When you add the stress of a 707 hearing, it must sometimes feel overwhelming. Has this time made you examine your life in ways you haven't done before? What have you discovered?

In The Studio

I walk into the studio and already I'm rappin'
I get these tracks on and the beat be slappin'
I pause for a minute just to feel the vibe
I got a main ninja and a twork on da side

-Rapper GU

From The Beat: Where do you record and what do you rap about?

All I know now, though, for you cats , if y'all say ya going to change, and they let you out, do it, or don't say that you're going to change.

I Miss My Girl

I miss my girl. Every time I think of her I want to cry because when I was dating her, she said I wasn't taking her serious, so she stopped messing with me. I was heartbroken because she left me, but I really was serious, and I did love her and still do.

I knew this girl for three years and we was friends before we started messing with each other. I never felt like this for a girl. She is my shield and my light. The way she laughs she makes me smile, but I really don't want to leave her alone. I want to take her with me, but I can't, but she will be with me in my mind and heart while I'm making a change in my life.

She will always have a place in my heart because she is the only girl I ever loved. You will always be my baby girl, W. I'm miss when you go away. That's ok, I'll love you as a friend and my girlfriend, but I'm mad right now because someone else has your love because you thought I wasn't serious, but that's ok, because I still love you.

-Deshay GU

From The Beat: Serious to one person can be just messing to another. Did you learn anything from this experience about love and respecting people's feelings?

I Know

I know you're gone
Flew so far away
But I dream of you
Every day.
I hope you come back
Because you seem to be
Gone for eternity
My son
My love for you
Is unconditional
I will never stop
Until your mom
Brings you home
So I wait for you
Here
I feel sad that
You are gone

-K YTEC

From The Beat: What will it take for you to be able to see your son again? What can be done to face the issues that are between you and your baby's mama, so that you are capable of seeing your son?

World Of Trouble

Man, they're trying to play me, but I'm still living in the world of trouble. They still holding me down, but man I can't live in this place no longer.

When I get up outta here, I'm going to straighten up. My PO and grandma don't believe me, but when I get out I'm going to show them. They're going to see.

-James B1

From The Beat: Do you think all the trouble that's going on in your world right now will subside one day? It's nice to hear that you are going to straighten up, but what are you going to do to straighten up? What changes are going to happen in your everyday life to make sure you are doing what you need to do?

Can't Wait

I can't wait till I get released because I'm going to do right. I think I made a mistake and it was a bad one because it was hard to get out the situation I got into.

I'm gone make it. This is the last time I'm gone come here.

To all the homies, stay down. I'm going to stay away from the wrong crowd, and stay to myself.

-Lil' Lloyd B1

From The Beat: What are you going to do to make sure you make it? How are you going to make sure you stay away from the wrong crowd? What's the first step in your plan of success?

Help Me

When I whisper
answer me
When I cry out
help me
When I'm in trouble
save me
But if you ignore me
I'll hurt you.

-Pained GU

From The Beat: We understand the desire to hurt others when you hurt, but we also know it doesn't really help. Do you have any ways of making yourself feel better when no one else is there to do it for you?

I Miss

I wanna say I love to be a Black and Latino man. I love to just smell roses in the morning. I miss the smell of my girlfriend's skin. I just miss.

-Young Threadz B4

From The Beat: One of the conditions of being in jail is missing those things you left behind. It's something you should think about when you are free again, and tempted to do those things that bring you here.

My #1

I have been praying to God for so long
to take me to a place where all I can feel is loved because I just got tired of being treated so wrong.

And now I think the day has arrived,
you came and brought all this happiness to my life
I no longer feel like I want to die
Instead I feel like I am ready to ride
'cause I know I'll always have you by my side.

You came and took all this pain away
and made me look forward to better days
It's because of you I can smile again.

So I thank God for putting you in my life
because without you, life would not be life.
You are the king of my heart
And I hope you always think about that

-Estrella GU

From The Beat: We hope this love stays with you, and that you get it from yourself, too. We send a bunch your way.

Mark Interviews Dragon

M: How do you feel in here?
D: I could be better.
M: When is your new album coming out?
D: Oh, you are talking about "Ass + Feet." Next week.
M: What is your favorite track on your CD?
D: Oh yeah, my favorite track is "put socks on them stanky ass feet, girl"
M: You ready for the movie business?
D: Yeah, "Draws and socks" is coming soon to a theater near you.
M: We got to go to the box, so talk to you next week.

-Mark B5

From The Beat: Where can we find your CD? Where can we see the movie? How can we get your autograph?

Cold Game

Something that's going to be with me for the rest of me life, is when some ninjas came and shot up my block and killed my ninja Chop, shot him in the back seat of the car.

-Slap Nut B1

From The Beat: How has this experience changed the way you live? Do you see yourself maybe changing who you associate yourself with to make sure you stay safe?

The Word

What's up, Beat? I really don't understand myself. I say I want to do good, then I think about it.

I be getting mad because they playing with my life. I drink, and smoke, and I like it like that. But, Man, they act like I'm endangering many lives.

I know what I'm doing. It's just I don't want to do what I say I was going to do in the minute. All I know now, though, for you cats , if y'all say ya going to change, and they let you out, do it, or don't say that you're going to change.

Me, I'm only here for a warrant. Almost 18 years old, and they still won't let me go with my moms.

-Slick B4

From The Beat: Should you be able to go home when you hit 18? If you're only here for a warrant, you should be home in a minute, right? Of course, you are old enough to decide if you want to drink or smoke, but if either one of those activities gets you into trouble (brings you to the Hall), then maybe it's time to consider other forms of amusement.

Smoking Weed Is Bringing Me Down

More weed for me if the ninja don't smoke. When I was on the outs I chopped every day just for the fun of it because when I get high I forget about everything.

Right now I am thinking about getting right. I stop stressing and just don't give a care. That's why when I get high I do stupid stuff. I was high when I got locked up. So I think I am going to stop.

-Lil' Marcus B1

From The Beat: Sounds like a good plan to us. How are you going to stay away from weed? How much bread do you think you have spent on weed in your lifetime? What are you going to do when those homies of yours pass you that first blunt?

Wifey

I sit in my room and think about my wifey and think about what the wifey on the outs is doing while I'm up in here locked up.

Wifey, I know you by my side 100% while I am locked up, and I know you ain't going nowhere. I got awhile till I come home, so stay up. (Dedicated to the wifey).

-Bear Weezy B2

From The Beat: Do you think she will stay with you a hundred percent all the time? If you keep doing the same thing and getting sent away, how patient do you expect her to be?

Stop the Hate

where i'm from
the ninjas they love to hate
but it's nothing
because we maintain
and stay above waters
look at us stunning
against all odds

-Lil' Rob

From The Beat: Those odds will catch up with you. It's simply true. When we look at you we see a young man who was free to do right — back in juvie tonight.

The Wrong Choice

i believed i could love you
but i guess i was wrong
i seen you creeping with this fool
and you were kissing him
hugging him and loving it
i should've never trusted you
now i have to be strong
'cause when i chose you
i guess i was wrong

-José

From The Beat: There's not much else you can do but endure the burn. Live and learn.

Locked Up

i am sitting here
in this county blue
like i don't know
what to do
wish i was home

-Joshua

From The Beat: Thanks for the poem.

Flip All That

i don't play
as a youngsta
i stepped in the game
an' in this life
i been struggling
'cause it's hard to maintain
so i need to start bubblin'
my childhood was wack
bring back all of that
twist it up like lil' flip
an' flip all that

-Chris

From The Beat: You'll flip the script when you're ready to quit the game. Get out while the getting's good, 'cause you still could reclaim your childhood despite all the pain.

The Ride

Cruisin' down the street on my tight scraper.
Bumpin' the fifteens everyone lookin' at me.
Lil' Shawn rollin' around the corner
Lookin' pretty fly on his twenty-inch rims.
They don't stop spinnin'.
Chillin' with the crew
Havin' some barbeque,
Talkin' 'bout the times with nothin' to do.
We're 'bout to bounce,

-Lil' Shawn

From The Beat: We like your reminiscin' but it seems like something is missin'. The blood, sweat and tears of the work you're talking about and of you and your loved ones when you're locked up. Remember you don't need to be bling blingin' to be happy. Those bbqs and being young sound fun.

If I Was At Home

if i was at home
i would be eating mom's cooking
and looking at the t v
high as i wannabe
but that's not how it is
see i'm in juvenile hall
writing for the beat
it's not cool bein'
locked up all the time
if only i could go home to family
this is not the place to be
stay out of juvenile hall if you can
i will be out and on my way to camp
but that's okay i'll be home soon
eating mom's cooking
r i p lil' mat

-Big Aaron

From The Beat: It's no joke. Stop the smoke long enough to see what keeps bringing you back to juvie. What is it you do to make this keep happening to you? Drop it. Stop it. Or you'll be home and back again quicker than a flapjack hits the pan.

Out In 2006

What's up? Man, I'm here just chillin' in the Hall. I just found out last week that I get out in the year 2006.

I ain't stressing too much over it. They're sending me to ROP in Nevada, and I have to do eighteen months. Plus it takes two to three months to get there.

But hey, I got to do it or else go to the Y. Well, stay up. I'm out.

-Crazy

From The Beat: The only way to beat the system, is start to listen. ROP can have you prepared to take your life in a new direction. Otherwise, you may miss the Y, but not the Department of Corrections!

Released Soon

What's up Beat! I'm finally getting released. My PO told me that I got a group home interview in a couple of days. I'm going to Stockton.

I'm going to pimp my program. I hope I don't mess up and run away! To all, stay up!

-Lil' Creep

From The Beat: The only one that can stop you from running is you. Just chill, stay clean and be coo'.

My Wifey

My wifey is the type of female that holds it down for her hubby, and when it's time to ride, she's right there on my side. I don't have to worry about these ninjas out here on the streets because she just tell these ninjas I'm faithful to Dirty-De. My wifey is hifey and she love to geese and no ifs, ands or buts to it, she gon' ride with me.

-Lil' Dirty-De

From The Beat: You mentioned she is cool off them scandalous ways. Do you mean she stays by your side when you do dirt and are incarcerated? One day she will realize she deserves someone that will be there. You can either choose incarceration and the scandalous life or freedom and a wife.

I'm Capable

i will smile
and kill your stare
you can't faze me
with that glare

-Lil' Mama Hanna

From The Beat: We printed only this much because The Beat is not about threatening retaliation but fostering amelioration.

Worst Day of My Life

The day I got detained, it was the worst day of my life — because they took me away from my family.

And now I miss my child. But I know that they can't keep me here forever, because I didn't do nothing big. But let me tell you what I did: I violated my probation by not going to school. I was not thinking smart. Next time I'm out, I will go to school — so I can get smarter.

-Kelandre

From The Beat: Next time you turn off your brain, make sure you've made it a habit to do the next right thing.

Praying I Get Out

What's up man! This is Lil' Jason once again in the Hall. I go to court on the twenty-sixth, praying to God that I get out.

This is my second time in the Hall, and I pray to God every night to help me get out of here, so I can go and play football for Berkeley High School — and so I can go to college.

To all the readers of The Beat, I just want to say: Don't come to jail if you have any kind of future. And stay in school! That's what I'm going to do, finish school when I get out of here. And I give my word to God on that!

-Jason

From The Beat: Go back to school, yes. And we hope you get to play football. Maybe it will help you stay off the street. You'll need all the help you can get. But in the end, it's strictly up to you! Do your do — and don't do what you shouldn't.

Lil' Leo to San Bernardino

What's up, Beat! This is Lil' Leo, writing my last piece from the Hall. Tomorrow I will be leaving to my group home in San Bernardino County.

I've been messing up for a long time. It's time to get my life on track and handle my business. I would like to thank Allan and Yvette for giving me good advice.

And as I'm leaving, I would like to say stay up to the following: Lil' Rickie, Goo Goo, Lil' Joe, Green Eyes, Giggles, Lazy, Payaso, Gato, Rocket, Casper, Droopy, Abo — every one of us caught up in this system. Until next time…

-Lil' Leo

From The Beat: There is a lesson to be learned in that list of names. You're not the only one that needs to stop messing up and start to change. Even if incarceration's a family tradition, it's a tradition that needs breaking. It's not just a matter of getting caught, it's a matter of starting to do what you ought. Keep your head up in SoCal, Leo.

Hating On Dirty-De

Man, they got yo' boy Dirty-De sitting in here like it's a thing to do. They got me missing my summer, what about you? They're trying to send me to the "Y" for something that I didn't do. Yeah that sounds like some shhh that the system would do but I ain't tripping 'cause they are hating on me just like these fake ninjas out here in the streets.

And my daddy always told me that these ninjas don't want to see me on top. They rather see me in a six by nine box. But I ain't gon' let that be the reason that my paper chase stop and plus they got these ninjas in here snitching just to make top ten, and half of these ninja snitch so much.

That' how they're thinking that it's cool. That's why in here I don't really have too many solid patnas 'cause I know when these ninjas snitch they gon' snitch again. That's why I mess with Johnny-G, Lil' Shawn, Emmy-Bo, Money-Man, Dolla-D, Moe. Keep yo' head up.

-Dirty-De

From The Beat: Thanks for putting it down. Have you ever thought about how sad it is to chase paper all your life? Look at the word, "chase". It sounds desperate and like it's the only thing. What about your girl? As far as snitching goes, you wouldn't have to worry about them if you were doing the right thing. Is it really the snitch that is wrong or you? People may look and act solid but they have more fear than the next person. Just some things to think about 'cause we don't want you in a casket, Dirty-De.

A Message

To all my brothers and sisters, I pray you leave and don't come back.

-Lil' La-La

From The Beat: Are you praying for yourself too?

Pimping This Program (Leroy!)

so far i've been doing good in camp
the staff in here are one hundred times
better than the hall
and i haven't got one write-up
i'm gon' stay here for about four months
hopefully i'll proceed with my program
without any vop's or dirties
shout-out to day day
pimp that program leroy
i'm out

-Brucie-bo

From The Beat: If by "pimp" the program, you mean to get over on it; then you'll just be back in the hall after all this. But if you mean you plan to work your program, you might just come out with a better plan to stay a free man, e.g., get a j-o-b with a GED.

Just Anotha Day

i was in east oakland
the date was —
man i forgot the date
but anyway it was me
and my two friends
we was at my friend's house
cutting school as usual
and we got hungry
so we decided to go get
something to eat
we went to the burrito truck
to go get some burritos
we sat down and ate when

-Vernial

From The Beat: We can't tell if it's going to be "just another day" or something else that started out that way. "To be continued."

My Advice

I gon' give some of these females some advice to help them wit' these ninjas like me that movin' at a fast pace out here, shinin' on these want to bee's, feel me? Most of these ninjas like me out here movin' at a fast pace, and if you ain't movin' at they pace, it ain't that they don't like you, they feel that you slowin' them down because you not movin' at they pace. So what I'm tryin' to say is pick up the pace.

And another thing is a ninja like me that like to be on the under, so they don't like when a female speak up in they name because it's too many ninjas start hearin' that name, ten they gon' start wondering who, what, where, how? What I'm sayin' by that is who is this ninja we keep hearing about? What he got and how he gettin' what he got? Especially if he out here shinin' hella hard.

So take my advice and either pick up the pace and keep yo' mouth close, or start looking fo' another toss.

-Lil' Molly

From The Beat: We see where you are coming from, but you also have to realize that you have no control over what people say. It's called freedom of speech and some people have bigger mouths than others. What you have to do is pick and choose whom to tell your business to and lay down the law in the beginning of the relationship. Say something like, "I don't want people to know my business so can you please try not to tell our business to others." Ya feel us? Also, you should respect a female the way you want people to respect your mother.

Thoughts

Man, I'm sitting in here rotting day by day, week by week, for a crime I didn't commit but that don't matter no more. I guess God just wanted me to lay down for a minute because I guess I was moving too fast on the streets and getting away with a lot of stuff and he thought I should sit and think.

Man, though, this is not the place to be. This shhh don't make me no better, it just makes you think about everything that's been going on in your life and that shhh is stressing me out. Then these staff talk so much shhh to me that I don't think I could take another month of that, but other than that I will be strong and do my time. I advise others to do the same.

-Lil' Joe

From The Beat: Do you think that the time you're spending in the Hall is justified for all the things you've done that you never were caught for? What have you learned from this experience? Will you take the lessons you've learned inside the Hall and apply them to your life on the outs so you don't come back to the Hall?

A Love For You

days and nights
i think of you
just wish you were here
with me at camp
but at the house
we'll just have fun
seeing each other
and go kick it
with a friend and homie
so yeah i love you
so much girl
that i would go anywhere
and do anything for you
i hope one day me and you
get together with each other too
peace lil' mama

-Lil' Thai

From The Beat: You need to start thinking about you and about what you plan to do to stay free, or else even if it is you and she — when you come back to be a detainee, you won't see her any.

New Placement

What is it? It's Young Sam hollerin' at The Beat and detainees out there. I went to court the other day. I got to go back on the 25th. My PO told me he gon' recommend a group home.

I'm just hopin' that I don't get sent far away because if I do, I know I'm gone bounce, so I just hope I get sent somewhere close so I can visit my mom on the weekend and my potnas and stuff. That would help me get through it, but the reason I know I'm gon' run is because if I could get away I'm out — straight up.

-Young Sam

From The beat: Why do you plan on running when you haven't even gotten there yet? Sometimes things that sound bad are actually blessings in disguise. Maybe this could be a learning experience for you. If you get your group home time over with, you can get out of the system and be able to see your mom all the time and not just on weekends.

My Thoughts

You can't really do nothin'. When I'm in my room I think about everything that's goin' on, like what everyone is doin' around the house. My mom, right now she'd at bingo or layin' on the couch, or maybe workin'. And my cousin Ant or my brother, he's 18, Clay he'd be with, I don't know what he'd be doin' I can't really think right now.

If I were home right now, I'd be shooting dice. I win every time; I got no secrets. Sometimes you win; sometimes you lose. Right now, I'm losin' 'cause I'm in here. If I wasn't in here I'd be winning.

I get out a week after I go to court. I'm gonna be at Camp for five months. What after I most looking forward to? Getting a job so I can stay off the streets.

-Eric

From The Beat: Do you think that you will always play dice even after knowing that so many people lose their life over a dice game? How can you make the best of your time at Camp? What do you hope to learn at Camp? What kind of job do you hope to get when you get out?

well i am writing

to the beat within again
it's me chucky back again
just saying 'sup,
be safe stay up
i am going to camp
to be home again soon
do your time
and finish your crime
i am out
[to be continued]

-Nelson

From The Beat: Do your time and be finished with a life of crime, 'cause that's the only way to stay home and feeling fine.

'Sup Beat

i'm'a try to write a poem
for y'all and i'll call it
far away —
as i lay far away
from my hometown
i wonder if i'll ever get back
it seems to me
i'll never be home
but i hope that thought
is just wack

-Marley

From The Beat: Yeah, it feels like forever when you keep asking when. Just do right it one day at a time and don't count them. And before you know it, you're out!

I'm Missing

I'm missing you hella much
I'm missing you boo
Why da' heck I gotta be up in here
My life is killing me
I want to be there with you
To see your cute shiny face
Just let me say this one more time boo
I'm missing you hella much
I'm missing you boo
I'm stressing and turning
and tossing in my little tinny room
'Cause I'm missing you.

-Cindy

From The Beat: It's really frustrating when we can't be with the one we love. Sometimes a time-out can be good. Maybe you should take this time to figure out where your life is going. Work on yourself, get your shhh straight. Then bring something positive to your relationship with your boo. What do you think? Is there an alternative?

Tomorrow

Black, white, yellow, brown, every day there is someone with a different color of skin in your town. It never fails to not see a confrontation,

Society has made it to where jealousy pumps up many situations.

We in the year 2004 have no clue that the world is coming to an end. Nonetheless, do we try to make a new friend?

Everyday it maybe a different outcome, one day you either want to do this, or even try to achieve a goal, to a job that someday you want to become. No one can make your future but you.

Don't decide tomorrow to plan your future. Today is the time, right now. At least you had a plan the day before you got put underground!

-No Sense

From The Beat: You're right when you say; today is the time to plan your future. What makes you think the world is coming to an end? What do you think the world will be at its end? The world has no clue? What do you know?

What's Up Beat

What's up Beat. This is Ray. I just want to say what's up ladies in Juvenile Hall. Man, I need a real woman because these girls out here is hella dirty. Not to disrespect y'all ladies but I think that there's fake pimps that are hella disrespectful, because how are you going to treat a woman like that?

What if somebody treat your mother like that? I will never do that to no woman because I was raised right. I will always give my girl what ever she wants.

-Ray

From The Beat: We're glad that there are still some men out there who have the utmost respect for ladies! If you were to pick a perfect date, what would it look like?

I Miss Ya'll

This is for my two girls Tishay & Tyresha,
It's been a long time.
Last week I just found out y'all last name.
Now look where I am, again.
Anyways.
I'm here to let ya'll know on the outs,
Ya'll are missed.
Lil' Rilla, L.Boogy, Ty, Slim, Vern, Myself,
And many more have reminisced,
And we truly miss ya'll.
One unit (ReRe and Felony).
One love to Lil' Mamma Mannie
"That girl look like Chucky's bride, huh?"
I woke up this morning and I knew the judge was gone
lock me up!!

-D-Janai

From The Beat: What are the qualities of a true friend? What makes these two girls such good friends? When you are released and you get the chance to kick it again — maybe y'all can be more responsible in how you get down.

To Pastor J-Wizzle

What's up? How are you doin'? Me, I'm fine, but wonderin' why you took your time to write me (laughing). But really, I don't know what love is!

I guess I like him a lot, to call it love. I was thinking God sent him from above (laughing). But for real though, I got my ways with everyone.

I read your poem, and your girl got one on the way. Be a good dad, and don't break her heart.

But yeah, I don't believe in love at first sight or saying "I love you!" on the first night!

But back to you Pastor J-Wizzle. Love can be peaches and cream, only if you make it. Some people take it and waste it. And then you have to go back to the basic.

But Pastor J-Wizzle, I wish you the best experience of being a father and a husband. And I hope you make it.

-Tyresha

From The Beat: Oops, you only saw the first two-thirds of Jepeabo's piece. Now you'll have to read the rest here in this issue of The Beat. And your wish for Jepeabo; may it be so!

I and I'm

i got a release
i get to see my family
i'm going to leave tomorrow
i got accepted to a group home
i got a new brother
i wish i could see my cousin
i'm goin to do my program
i have got a goal for myself when i get out
— i'm not comin' back to the hall

-Queazy

From The Beat: Props on your placement! It wasn't your fault this last time you came to the Hall, but that is one great goal! Do your program and take it deep, then take it back to the street and change the way you direct your feet — you will succeed!

To Those...

TY, it's better for you to be behind bars than out on the streets. Get 'cha act right. Jasmine, the baby need you. Stay out of trouble!

To my family member Jacari, thanks for everything. Good looking out, family member!

-D-Janai

From The Beat: You have given some loving advice and to these people. What advice do you have for yourself?

Dedicated To The One I Used To Love

Dear Dennis,

I still love you even if we are not together. I'm missing you. We've been together a long time. I can't be with you, because you are not for me 'cause you cheated on me, left my heart broken.

Why did you lie? One day you're going to sit down and think, I had a good thing. We had our good days and our bad days. Just to tell you, I still love you. You should learn how to treat a good woman that's been there, through thick and thin. Love forever!

Part 2 - Let It Burn
I'm missing you on the other side
I still cry these tears from my eye
Wondering where you been
I can't believe you lied
My heart died
That's the way it felt inside
I still sit down and cry
I wonder if you feel the way I do
I hope this finds you
I hope you realize
I don't want to cry.

-Lil' La-La

From The Beat: It's hard to love someone who lied to you. It really hurts. If someone lies to you, they're probably too selfish to truly love you. You deserve better than that. Be patient, your beautiful, you'll find someone that will treat you with the respect you deserve.

I'm Missing You Already

Dad,

I'm missing you a lot. It is hard that you're gone. Just made fifteen years old and your out of my life.

You were a good person. Sometimes I wish God will let me see you one more time. Man, if I don't ever see you again, save me a spot.

I just wanted to tell you, I love you.

Your baby girl, La-La.

Sometimes I wish I could be with my father again but know he is in a better place.

-Lil' La-La

From The Beat: We all go through feelings of loss, when a loved one passes. Take comfort in knowing that he is in a better place, and all though he is not with you in the physical, his energy surrounds you infinitely.

All About Me

My name is Raleigh
I'm from the East Bay
I feel like I am lost livin' in the streets of the Bay
I like to run around outside
I have hella homies
I feel like its nothin'
I like girls and music
I really don't like school too much
I like to sleep
I live in Hayward
I live life to the fullest
I do what I can to help people.

-Raleigh

From The Beat: Thanks for introducing yourself to us. What do you like most about living in the bay area? What is your definition of living life to the fullest? What is your favorite kind of music? What do you like most about running around outside?

Out Soon

9-vo, soy ese Pollo, just kicking back doing my time.

I want to say 9-vo to all the homies, que estan aqui. Don't even trip we'll be out soon. I want to say 9-vo to my perro el Guero waz up homie. Orale pues al rato.

-Pollo

From The Beat: El Pollo, you'll be out soon. Will you be back? We hope not.

A Gift

When I fell out the window, when I was two years old and split my cheek on the bars, then fell to the ground from a two-story window on my mother's birthday.

It was a gift I got 35 stitches on the left side of my cheek

-London

From The Beat: London, hmm, you have an interesting perspective here. Some people might look at the situation as a bad experience, or a time that they felt bad, but not you. You acknowledge the "gift" of 35 stitches. Sometimes we overlook, the great things in life. Thanks for bringing us back to reality.

I do what I can to help people

Being In Here

I hate when the staff tell me when to use the restroom and to drink water and to sleep and to eat, I feel like shhh.

That's what bring me down and I miss hyna. That what bring me down, and it my fault.

-Danny Boy

From The Beat: When you are in the Hall, you got people that make decisions for you, to keep you out of trouble. You need to develop this voice inside yourself, so that when you are on the outs you can tell yourself when and what to do, to keep yourself out of trouble. Ya' think? Take this a learning experience.

The Beat Within

9-vo, soy el Pollo and I want to drop this line for The Beat Within.

The only reasons that I don't like reading The Beat Within is because all I read about is people whining about being locked up and acting like they didn't do anything to get lock up. I think they are some punk snitches. I'm just doing my time and I ain't even tripping. Carale pues, q-vo to all the homies up in here. Don't let no one put you down, alrato.

-Pollo

From The Beat: We do have a lot of writing that sounds like complaining. But actually, it's ok. This is a way people get out their frustrations. When you have no one to talk to, no one to comfort you, you got The Beat Within. Everybody needs someone to listen. What do you think?

Back Up In The Hall

Man, I'm back up in the Hall. I was just here three weeks ago and now I'm back because I awoled from my group home.

But it's cool though, 'cause I got court on Monday and I'll most likely be able to get released to my dad. He stays all the way in East Long Beach. That's really where I'm from though, so, I ain't trippin', for real.

-Melissa

From The Beat: It's going to be cool if you get released to your dad, right? Do you think that your dad will help you stay out of trouble? We don't want to see you in the Hall again. How do you plan to change your life around, so that you don't end up back here in a few weeks? Do you have a plan?

My Prayer

I say this to myself every night before I go to bed. It's something I learned when I was a little boy. My grandma taught me this prayer and I will never forget it:

"Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the lord my soul to keep, if I shall die before I wake, I pray the lord my soul to take."

One person in my life that is very important to me is my grandmother. I love her and would do anything for her. She has supported me with all the decisions I have made and has always been behind me.

When no one has my back I can always count on my grams. Being in here I really realized that she is a very important person in my life. She knows it too. I love you very much, Grams. I'm on my way home to come and take care of you.

-Kurupt

From The Beat: We bet your grandma feels very lucky to have you for a grandson, just as you feel very lucky to have her for your Grams. By now, of course, you know that you cannot take care of her if you're locked up. The best gift you can give her is exactly the same as the best gift you can give yourself: permanent freedom!

Thiz-A-Lot

I'm from the block
Where ninjas set up shop
When the police come we shut down shop
And when the police leave we set up shop
Hittin' cornas in a Mali wit a big block
This thug life I'm livin'
But the E made me do it
It made me lose it
From watchin' Scarface I got influenced
Hustlin' and smokin' I had to do it
My block I had to rule it
Youngsta with a tool shed
Wit' mo' game than an arcade
Watchin' my back so I don't get sprayed
OGs they do hate
'Cause I touch mo' cheddar than nachos
I came from a youngin to a real rogue
My gold teeth look like they was deep froze

-Thinzel Washington

From The Beat: So it was the E that made you do it? Or was it the movie? It appears that things happen to you over which you have no control at all, right? The Devil made you do it! Well, while you're touching all that cheddar, look around. Seems to us that you've become a chip for the system which is dipping you in the hot sauce and nibbling around the edges. Gold teeth don't make the man...

Fake

Why is it that people that talk dirt neva do dirt? Why do they only talk behind their door or only when staff's around? Why can't they tell you face to face when no one's around or looking? Or when you tell them to swing, it seems like they drop balls.

So what's the point of talking shhh if you ain't gonna do anything? More than half these people only talk. That's why this is a weak generation of people.

Most of these cats are fake. They talk the talk but don't walk the walk. So why do people talk dirt?

-Chunk-E Munk-E

From The Beat: Frankly, we'd prefer people to talk dirt than to do it... For us, a more important question would be to flip yours around: Why do people DO dirt (whether they talk about it or not)? Is this "weak" generation in the Hall for talking dirt or doing it?

In The Box

My mental images is so rugged and shady.
Youngstas growing up without
fathers and having babies.
Calling females names, instead of ladies
Got to prove a point every time someone play me.
This game is so deep
Play yo' cards right or you might end up six feet deep
inside of a box, so small and tight.
To my people, you know this game is so right.

-Devious

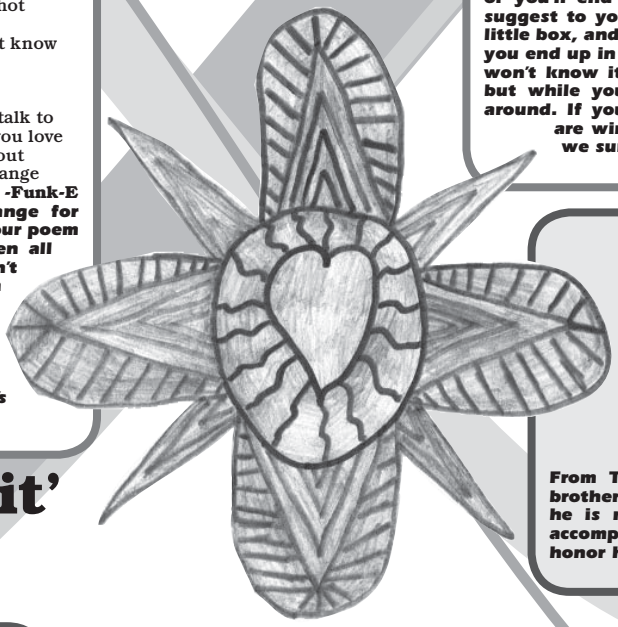
From The Beat: Your advice to play the game right or you'll end up in a box "small and tight." We suggest to you that you are already in that tight little box, and you don't even know it! Of course, if you end up in the box you were talking about, you won't know it either (you won't know anything), but while you're still in the world, take a look around. If you're playing your cards right, if you are winning the game (that put you here), we sure would hate to see the losers!

It's Hard To Change

It's hard to change when you been livin' this lifestyle all your life
It's hard to change and try to be somebody you're not
It's hard to change when you're tryin' to do right
It's hard to change when two of your homies got shot
It's hard to change when you want revenge
It's hard to change when you've been in here and don't know
what's going on out there
It's hard to change when you can't let out
how you really feel on the inside
It's hard to change when you ain't got a roommate to talk to
It's hard to change when you wanna be with the ones you love
It's hard to change when you keep coming in and out
It's hard to change when you really don't want to change

-Funk-E

From The Beat: In fact, it's always hard to change for anyone. But we think the most important line in your poem is the last one. If you don't want to change, then all the other reasons you gave for not changing don't mean anything. It should be easier to change when you "wanna be with the ones you love" since you know that without changing, you'll be separated from them again and again, or maybe even permanently. So, forget all those other reasons you gave for not changing, and explain to us why — knowing what you know about being the system's slave — you still don't want to change.



Retaliation

From the things I seen
to how old I be, only 15
and I'm selling "D"
and I know my dead brother looking
down at me
but this is how a young brotha got
to be
hard and solid from the heart and soul
but if one of my brothas get killed
I can't let that go.

-Bird Man

From The Beat: What do you think your brother would say to you from where he is now? What would he want you to accomplish? How would he want you to honor his life? Are you doing it?

my city stays wit' high crime

Up In My Town

In the town I reside
We smoke blunt after blunt, two at a time
Where we see rivals on our corner we throw up our sign
That why my city stays wit' high crime
In the town funk ain't no joke
Have liquor pouring out of bottles that belong to ya folks
On every block ninjas slangin' coke
If we don't spit up rocks for taste they make us choke
Watchin' them raid my house while on a Newport I toke
Babies wanderin' the streets
While we scheme on ways not to be broke!

-Young Smokey

From The Beat: This is a grim description of your life. We're not sure if those blunts you're smoking two-by-two help deaden the pain of your existence, or contribute to it by deadening your brain. Besides the dope game, are there any legitimate ways to make your money? In other words, now that you've learned the basics of business (through illegal activity), can you apply what you've learned to a legitimate business? If you had the capital to start your own business, what would it be?

The Long And Bumpy Road

What's up wit it? It's ya young patna, Smokey, droppin' a few lines one more time.

Well, after almost two years of juvi hall, Camp Glenwood and group homes in both LA an' the Bay, ya boy 'bout to go back home.

Before I get on, I want to tell all the homeboys and homegirls that I'm still doing time and awaitin' court. That's just because the road is bumpy now. Sooner or later it will smooth out.

To Mousie an' Sleepy, good luck at camp. To ÑoÑo an' Ruben, good luck at court. To Nicoya, good luck in CYA. To Peanut Head, Sick, the Hulk, Kurupt, Thinzel, be coo' and finish y'all time in the Hall.

-Young Smokey

From The Beat: What are your plans for when you get home? What will you be doing differently than before? What will you stop doing? What will you start doing? We've loved having you in The Beat workshops, Young Smokey, but we sure don't want to meet you here again! Good luck!

It's hard to change when you really don't want to change

Quick To Judge

Damn! I been getting hella mad lately because all these staff always quick to judge me. They be thinking that just because they read my file that they know me and everythang about me.

To tell you the truth, they don't know nothing about me. They don't know who I really am. They think just because I be acting like a fool up in here, that I be acting like that on the outs.

The thing is up in here I can't just be bored because if I'm always bored, then my time is gonna go by hella slow. If I act a fool then my time be going by quick. That's the only reason I be acting like a fool, feel me.

I'm out wit' that. Check y'all out next week.

-Lil' D

From The Beat: It's our experience that all of us are too quick to judge others, whether it's the staff judging you or you judging the staff. As for acting the fool, if it makes your time go by — and doesn't get you in deeper trouble than you're already in — then go for it.

Spooked

I went to court on May 3rd. The judge told me that I could go home wit' moms, or I can go live wit' my sister in Hayward 'cause my mom might lose the place we live in now 'cause moms ain't working.

At first I was all, "Right on, I get to hit the outs." But now that I think 'bout it, I ain't been home in 'bout two years. Well, I have, but not legally, like on the run.

The judge told me if I mess up and get any kind of violation, like comin' home late or smoking Newports, I got to do 255 days dead time, then go to court to get sentenced. It got me spooked 'cause I don't want to mess up and come back here or somewhere else.

Hopefully everything will work out for the best

-Young Smokey

From The Beat: There are times when it's good to be spooked, Young Smokey. There's a time to play and a time to be serious, and with those judge's words in your ears, you have to know that this is one of those serious times. We hope you'll be able to resist the temptations we both know will come your way with freedom, because if you can't, your freedom will be very short. Self control may not be easy, but neither is being a prisoner!

Don't Push Me Because I'm Close To The Edge

I' so close to the edge that if I get pushed again I might fall
But then again I'm gonna get pushed — Why? Because I'm in the Hall
Only if people knew my situation then they would know I'm no punk and I'm not gonna take it anymore
But it seems like every time they say something to me I get ran to the floor
It's no like I'm scared to fight it's just when I do it's cut off the light, time to go night-night
But I can't trip off these haters, I'll shake 'em off
I know that I'm gonna be out soon and if I let them get to me I'll be doomed for sure.

-Youn1

From The Beat: There's some maturity in your recognition that tripping about the small stuff — the haters, the people who are pushing you — isn't worth it 'cause you're going to be out soon. How will you maintain your cool and let it slide? The skills you develop now for dealing with the stress that you're facing on the everyday will continue to pay off when you return to the outs — the Hall isn't the only place with haters.

Disturbing Images Didn't Disturb Me

All the disturbing images I hear people talk 'bout, like 9/11, that space craft that crashed, and dude that got his head cut off, I was locked up for all of that stuff. So none of that stuff bothered me really. In a way, I wanted to be on the outs so that I could be home and watch it on TV.

-Young Smokey

From The Beat: We're curious why you'd like to see these images? Is it like seeing a wreck and slowing down to look at the blood? Is it like a video game? Do you think you would have been disturbed by these images?

My View On Telling

Telling was invented for people who are scared of the next man. True snitches need to get stitches but the neighborhood I grew if you snitch you get more than stitches you get your very own funeral and I'm not promoting violence, I'm just keeping it real cause it's a shame the way people are snitching on one another.

I read a lot of pieces on this topic and most of them were true because rape or any form of violence on or towards kids or women deserves to be told about 'cause it's ridiculous. Well I know that if someone did something to my family they're gonna tell me then call 5-0, but snitching is a thing that's going on worldwide and once a snitch always a snitch, 'cause snitches has kids who are taught to be snitches. So therefore, it's an endless cycle.

-Youn1

From The Beat: Where do you draw the line between something that's ridiculous and therefore deserves to be told, and something where telling is wrong. The thing we're most confused by is why so much hatred is spent on the snitch when they wouldn't have anything to snitch about if you didn't do anything that they could tell on. We're not pretending that you're going to turn around and love those who tell on you, but if you're really trippin' on it, don't give 'em anything to tell about.

Make It Through

Three days till court and you know I'm stressin'
Yeah, I'm doin' time but ain't learnin' no lesson
I got my mindset
I lived a thuggish life but I ain't done yet
And when the time comes, the day they let me out 'bout to hit the cuts,
take a different route
'cause I got to stay out of jail this time
I got big plans for my hustle, I got girls on my mind
My main homie went down too
Cous', I feel your pain, stress on that "Dogg Pound" crew
But like you say, you gots to survive
Whatever goes down we got to revive
Make it through, continue our lives
Remember, keep your eyes on the prize

-Rocheleau

From The Beat: What are your big plans for your hustle? We applaud your determination to stay out of jail this time, and we know you know what you have to do. Time will tell whether you can do it or not. We believe you can. Do you?

Sometimes life is so hard for me.

The Key To My Heart

Such a cliché, "The key to my heart,"
When all they really do is tear it apart
Look once, look twice
It's never really love at first sight
"Prince Charming and a white horse,"
that shhh only ends in divorce
"You think you love me baby, well I think I love you too,"
You want to be my Superman, but check it — I ain't no fool
If a man's gotta do what a man's gotta do
Then a woman's gotta do what a woman's made to do.
Like I said before this shhh ain't no game
It shouldn't be played
It's a waste of time
Being called a "playa" should be a crime.
But I really should have known from the start
That I hold the key to my own heart!

-Ginger

From The Beat: We couldn't agree more with your last line, and despite all the pain you've been through due to men in your life, you will always own that key — you can't even give it away. Are you swearing off men for good, or is there room for someone who comes at you with honesty and integrity — someone who's not a player? What if, instead of looking for Superman, you look for a flawed-but-good man?

Rest In Peace Solo

I remember when I was postin' up in Daly City bout a few months ago… I had told the homies to come thru to my pad. Then they came to the place wit' hella drank. We kicked back and got hella bent.

Solo was there, and that was a week before he got shot up in Daly City. I think about it like it's yesterday… he was hella coo'. I also remember him tryin' to holla at Meeh, but I didn't fall for it. Now that he passed away I hella wish we messed around (hehe).

Anyways, rest in peace homie! Daly City ain't the same without you! I'm a still pray for you. We all miss you dearly.

-Clumsey

From The Beat: It's tragic that he's gone, and we can't imagine what it's like to live with the memory of that week before he was killed. Are there lessons to be learned from his life? What steps can you take to avoid his fate? How can you learn to put the drugs and drink aside, so that you can make deeper use of the (all too short) time you have in life?

I Can't Believe This

Sometimes life is so hard for me. My homie just passed away and now my PO is giving me six-to-nine months in Camp just for being there for my homie Chente. I can't believe this.

I have to stop my mom's tears every time she comes see me. I'm always telling her don't trip moms, I'll be out one day. God knows why He's doing this. I hope I do good up in Camp so I can get out soon, so I don't have to see my moms crying anymore.

RIP Chente. Hope you in a better place homie.

-Smokey

From The Beat: It sounds like you're in a particularly rough spot, though we're not sure what "just for being there for my homie" really means. What are you going to do to make sure your time at Camp is as good as you can make it? How will you make sure your mom doesn't have to shed any more tears on your behalf, unless they're tears of joy? Most importantly, how can you learn from the tragic death of your homie so that you don't follow his path to an early grave?

Woofing And Bluffing

Never will you catch me bluffing or woofing, knock on wood.
Bluffing will get you nowhere in the game.
Bluffing and woofing will get you hot ones to the brain. If you bluffing and woofing you should be ashamed. Somebody sweep up the bluffs that lasted.
You never got shanked and you never got blasted.
I'm too roguish to be woofing and bluffing.
For them cats using my name you got me huffing and puffing.
But it's nothing.
It's Shane, but everyone know me by Devious or Lil' Chep
because I'm mischievous in these streets,
and I'm vicious like a K-9 let off his leash.

-Devious

From The Beat: Have you ever had to bluff? What were the circumstances? Some people speak very intelligently about things they haven't experienced first-hand. Is that a bluff or a woof? Sometimes there is more truth in fiction (a made-up story) than in non-fiction (straight reporting of the facts).

Young An' Broke

Being a young broke brotha,
but always smokin' some herb
Walkin' the streets of the city,
kicking rocks off the curb
Always posted wit' the OG, so the game I observed
Pockets always empty and it had me disturbed
At nights I couldn't sleep, I tossed and turned
'Cause I was hungry for that money
and in my soul it burned
Started gang bangin', slangin', had mama concerned
At night my celly would ring of the hook,
but that money earned
Wit' my first hundred I got me a dickie fit
All creased up and the Cortez to go wit'

-Young Smokey

From The Beat: How many hundreds did you make before the system made you its slave? We notice you aren't wearing that dickie fit now... And we bet that your mama's concern has now grown into anguish! Is this what you want for your life — and for hers?

Images I Have

Damn I still have images in my head that I refuse to think about, like when one of my folks got shot in the head. Everything was so quick that he couldn't say his last word. He couldn't even ask God to be forgiven for all his sins.

It wasn't like a movie or a TV show. This shhh is real — death is real. But we're all bad boys; we do what we do. Rest in peace folks!

-Bad Boy

From The Beat: We feel so much of what you're saying — death IS real, and it is unspeakably tragic to witness a violent death at such a young age. That you're even able to write about your folks who was shot is a remarkable display of strength on your part. What we don't feel, however, is how easy you let yourself off, simply saying that you're all bad boys and you do what you do. Instead of dealing with the pain, this sounds like a denial of pain. The pain you feel is real, and it's teaching you an important lesson if you listen to it.

Lamei's Emotions

All my emotions build up inside
I don't know what to do
Or how to feel, 'cause it feels like a tide
As my eyes start to get wet
They drip down my cheeks
Makes me feel like it will let
Me express and let go of all the pain
That has build up in me
Slowly I feel myself fall to my knees
Pray to God that he will please let me be free
Free from all the hate, and greed
Now I see how it really is to beMeeh
Stuck in the system! Makin' me wanna go crazy
Instead I maintain and have wisdom
No matter what them staff try and do
They ain't gon' fade meeh
'Cause I'll put 'em in their place too
See now here's a little story I've got to tell
It started off catchin' a case
But how I'm up in here tryin' to lace you up wit' some game!
It seems to me I'm gon' do 180 days
It's nothing tho'
I'm ride it out till da wheels fall off
So if you wanna see Clumsey
I'll show you who I be!

-Lamei

From The Beat: Right on, Lamei — it's about time you stepped up and delivered a piece about what's really goin' on with you. While we feel much of what you say, we're left with some questions: How can you possibly put staff in their place? It seems that any resistance will only make them more tempted to exercise their power over you. Why do you think they hate on you? Also, you tell us to come to your 'hood to see who you really are, but here you are in the Hall — if we went there we wouldn't be able to see who you are at all 'cause you're not able to be there. What are you willing to do to make sure that when you finish your time you're able to stay free in your hometown, instead of risking making Hillcrest or other institutions the only place anyone's able to see you?

Marin

My Big Brother

My big brother, Josh, is very cool and kind to me and my twin. He is in a punk rock band and he is very good at the base guitar. He lives with my grandpa and he wears a leather jacket and there are studs and spikes on his jacket and he has bleached hair and wears striped pants and I love him very, very much.

-Jason

From The Beat: Your brother sounds so wonderful, Jason. Do you and your twin brother like to dress alike? Do you guys fool people?

Morning In My Cell

I woke up this morning in my cell, thinking of my jefita y mi jefe. How I used to make them cry when I used to be en la calle de desmadroso, doing that water.

Now look at me! I'm locked up like y doing my time. I'm about to turn eighteen and I'm out.

-Rafa

From The Beat: Don't you think you should forget that crystal meth? It can lead to nothing good. Don't you think your parents need you home? How do they feel about you being addicted? Don't you need to go home? How are you doing in Juvy without your drugs? Will you be able to resist that water when you get out? If not, how can you get help?

Me And My Girlfriend

My girlfriend is the person I care the most about, the most next to my mom. I love her to death and she feels the same way about me and that's one of the greatest feelings in the world. She takes care of me and I take care of her.

She is the one who influences me to stay out of Juvenile Hall. She's got dirty blond hair, hazel eyes and a beautiful body. And I love her to death.

-Marty

From The Beat: Your lady sounds wonderful. So what are you doing up in Juvy? Why did you risk being away from such a wonderful relationship?

Implications

Implication of
An altercation matriculation
Imagination dictation of
The southeastern Asian
Nation association
Because of their communism
Decision regarding
Infatuations
Probations and annihilation
Due to over-population
And insanitation
Of the mortification
Of emancipation proclamations
Situations
Situations

-Paul

From The Beat: The sounds of your words are hypnotizing, but Paul, what does this mean?

I Woke Up Late

I woke up this morning kind of late, but everything was all right. I dressed up and got ready to go to school. I was thinking to get some Crispy Chicken or a Whopper for lunch, but things were in a very different way; I got to school without knowing.

I got into a fight. To beat up that guy cost me being here, locked up. If I knew, I wouldn't have woken up and maybe I could have had more than Crispy Chicken.

-Crispy Chicken

From The Beat: You don't write about what happened at school, or why you felt you had to beat up some guy? How could you have made things right with this guy, besides beating him up? How would you handle this incident, if it happened tomorrow?

I Remember...

I don't really remember any time I gave an apology to someone, but I do remember why I'm here in MCJH. I just finished all my housework and my brothers got home. I didn't let them in, so the older of the two kicked the window, so I kicked the crap out of them.

-Rick

From The Beat: Do you wish you had handled this incident differently? How would you handle it now?

Apology To Mom

I think that I owe an apology to my mother for being apart for many years and not taking care of her, neither for my brothers. She is the nicest person I have even known. She raised me up and took care of me until I left.

I want to apologize her because I don't call home very often. I'm gonna miss you a lot. Nothing hurts me but being apart.

-Crispy Chicken

From The Beat: How can you make up for lost time with your mother? When you get out, how can you respect your mother more?

Weekly Writings

Born

Born and raised in Daly City,
Neva gave about those who acted so niddy.
Runnin' around actin' a foo',
Trying to maintain my barrio life that was up to no good.
Family was there,
Females had their share,
Homeboys was down for a dare,
But life still hit me with reality.
What should I do when so-called homeboys turn on you?
What should I do when my homeboys jump me like a fool?
Never gave a damn about those who are suckas,
But did give a damn about those who are lovas,
I ain't so cruel, I ain't that new
I have an OG mentality to put it down for mine.
Laced up and put up on the game by the veteranos,
Taken stuff serious with no shame,
My life is incomplete with little complete of knowledge and respect. One love to the homies facin' time in YA, county, juvie and prison
A youngsta reppin' for mine.

-Young Crazy

From The Beat: Sounds like you're learning from the veteranos example that it ain't worth it , there ain't no future in it, holmes. Ain't nothing wrong with repping for yours, so long as that is exactly what you are doing; representing yourself and your interests before someone else's. You know there ain't nothing wrong with that.

It's Serious

My life is serious to me. I'm tired of being in this placement, so I'm going to get up out and get back on my feet so I could keep writing to The Beat.

I'm hoping someday that I could stay away from the police. Life's serious 'cause I want to be with my family and stay out the system so that I'll never be a victim of the system.

-Danny

From The Beat: That is what we like to hear. Young folks like yourself taking control of your lives and being responsible to the important things, like your freedom. Stay focused young homie.

Get Away

Get away from weak minded people and the fake people.
Get away from the wrong
Get away from your old life
And these fake females
Get away from the people
That's trying to hold people down
Get away from people that's trying to take your life
Get away from people that's trying to provoke
Get away from people that don't care
About their life
What makes you think
That they care about yours?
Get away from San Francisco.

-Richard

From The Beat: Nobody should have to leave the city in order to get away from the negativity. You offer some good advice here Richard but the city has it's good, bad and ugly and a lot of folks have endured it all to become free and successful. Maybe you do need to get away from certain spots in the city for a while to chill, but every city has its problems.

A Beautiful Future

Strange encounter for me was when I met this girl. At the time to me she just was another girl, but after awhile of being with her, we ended having a serious relationship. Now my perception is way different.

Instead of trying to do things with her, I love and care for her. And even though she ain't the momma of my babies, we still have a strong Christian-based relationship.

When I get out of here and off probation, we're planning to get married and start our family.

Everybody thinks it's funny because I'm a dope fiend and a gang banger, and she is a model, straight A student, future actress and hasn't even touched a can of beer or cigarette. She's the reason I'm into God because he blessed me with a good life and a beautiful fiancé..

-Paul

From The Beat: Sounds like a good plan to us. We met a man recently who spent over ten years in prison for something he did not do, and he recently told us that all he wanted to do when he got out was mow his lawn. Stay on that positive track, Paul.

Strange Encounters

I don't really have any one person that gave any positive messages to me. Everyone always gives me negative messages and I never really learned from anyone. But the Walden House is really what has helped me.

The Walden House is kind of a strange encounter because I didn't expect to come here because I am not on probation and I have never been locked up or ever been in trouble with the law. The Walden House here is to help me and I am taking full advantage of it.

-Chad

From The Beat: This could be a good experience then. You are basically gonna walk out of here with a lot of game and knowledge and no criminal record. So what would you say has been the best and worst thing about being there?

Respect Yourself

This one time when I was on the bus, this guy came and sat next to me. I started talking to him about how I ran from my last program to get high, and how determined I was to get some.

Well, he started telling me that I shouldn't be doing the things that I do, that I have a lot of better things to do, and that I should have more respect for myself.

Well, I still think about what he said when I'm in a situation like that.

-Samantha

From The Beat: He gave you good advice. Has your meeting him kept you from doing things you might have done if you never met him?

Love And Respect

Yeah, Man, I can hella relate to this topic because the homie David D taught me a lot of things. One of the things I learned from the homie is love and respect. I got a lot of respect for this man, Homie.

I ain't never been told things that have really stuck to me until I met him. Me and the homey can talk about anything, anything in the world, and we can get into a conversation for a long ass time. I have nothing but respect for this man and ain't nothing gonna change.

-Samers

From The Beat: it is really encouraging to see young folks like you guys demonstrating such solidarity while incarcerated. That is so long as the solidarity is based on a positive theme. We dig how you guys are supporting each other. Keep on with your righteous example.

Walden House Family

The encounter I had was with several different people.

There are these people who come to Walden House adolescent facility who are from a Walden House in Los Angeles. They are older men who wasted away their lives in prison and are in Walden House on parole trying to straighten out what is left of their lives. Most of them are not in contact with their families or kids because of the things they did.

Every time I am encountered by these men I grasp every word because it is too painful thinking about it, and I wouldn't want to live it.

-Warhead

From The Beat: That is a sure shot way to learn a lot and get a lot of experience without having to go through all the agony yourself. It's called "vicarious learning." Keep on at it and you will absorb all the game and knowledge you will be able to endure a lot more then most.

A Strange But Well Spoken Encounter

A strange encounter that I had was with an OG.

An OG once told me that the sky is the limit and you should have goals, shoot for the sun and if you miss, no stress you will be amongst the stars, and that really made me think.

It made me think about what I was doing and what my goals were. My goals when I was out there on the streets was to be that hard ninja, put in the most work and not to go out like a sucka.

But now that I look on what I was doing, I was setting myself up for failure. I was basically out there wasting the only life that I have. And that's going out like a sucka, ya feel me?

-Juda

From The Beat: What made you realize the difference in how you were living? What would you say to someone else going through the same challenges now? So how will you pursue your goals now? What are they?

I'm on my way to being myself and making my family happy

How I Live My Life Is Serious

It's real serious how you live your life. That's serious to me because since I was twelve years old, I been going through hell. I been in shoot outs and I witnessed people getting shot and killed.

I have experienced with ecstasy, weed, alcohol, and tobacco, but I never used cocaine or heroin. I've been beat up and jumped for my set. I've had sex with girls and left them numerous times just because all I wanted was sex and I got what I wanted.

But now I'm at Walden House. I have been here for six days now. To be honest, Walden House is not cool. But instead of taking the easy way out of this situation and running, I'm going to go the hard way, the way people like me can't do. When I say people like me, I mean young kids my age and up that can't take the pressure and is addicted to the streets. They caught up but don't want to do nothing but mess up.

But I'm changing every day, and I'm on my way to being myself and making my family happy by becoming successful in life, but in a positive way. Not saying that I'm scared of the streets, but saying that I don't want to lose my life to death or to the jail house. That don't mean I'm gonna change to another person. I'm just gonna change a few actions before it's too late.

I love my ninjas, and I don't want to see none of my ninjas die or go to jail, and I hope they feel the same way about me because I would ride or die for my ninjas, and that's real.

But I'm out this piece. Keep y'all heads up Marcus and Lil' Keezy and J-Stub and Lil' CD. RIP Lee, Cheez, Reem, Fred, D-Dirt, Uncle Peter Lee. One love.

-Young Duke-El

From The Beat: You have lived a long life in not too many years young homie. Time to slow down and catch up with growing up, you feel us? A lot of the things you mention having been through really touched us because some of us here have been there and done that too, and so it follows we know how painful it all is. But we found a lot of hope in the fact that you are open to change now, and recognize how important it is. Stay focused, and don't get caught up by the past.

Struggle

It a struggle tryin' to bubble
I'm serious about setting my money
In a way that won't get me in trouble
I know I been there done that
And I still fell back
Now, I trying to get far in a way
trying to make my chips stack
that won't have me behind bars.

-Andre

From The Beat: Ain't nothing wrong with going legit'. Look at virtually anyone who has made it successfully in our world, and you will see that they did it by learning how to convert a legal hustle. Handle your business, young homie, we are pulling for you.

Living In That Struggle

Struggling in that life I live today
Where kids seventeen and under don't give a damn what you say
Kids just teens running around getting sprayed
Moms around the world shedding tears day after day
Kids from broken homes selling yay to get paid
Kids having unprotected sex catching AIDS
Kids getting high and drunk to hide their feelings
'cause they're afraid
Afraid to be honest and afraid to open up
Afraid to tell they family what's going down and what's up
Kids struggling trying to get respect 'cause they don't want to be known as no punk
Finding out that their homies or one of their family was found in a back of a trunk
Kids falling deeper and deeper in that thug life
Kids' fathers in the pen doing 25 to life
Kids in it so deep they can't see no light
Majority of the kids want to kill and fight
And just a few want and need to change their life
Those few kids trying to do something right
Those few kids found the light
While the other kids still thinking it tight
Putting their mommas through a lot
'Cause they dying all night
I am glad that I am one of them few
And don't get me wrong, you could be one of them too.

-Nifae

From The Beat: Hey, young Uso, it always inspires us to see you put it down. This has got to be not only one of the best pieces we have read coming from you, but one of the best we have seen period! You speak of a desperate reality here that you have been learning how to overcome, and that is powerful testimony. Stay strong and don't forget your purpose is something greater than the rut you have been stuck in.

Judgment

There is a higher justice than that of man. I will be judged by Him.

-Jeff

From The Beat: The problem is, giving in to God's judgment doesn't keep you from also being a subject of man's (and woman's) judgment. Render unto Caesar.

Where Am I Going?

What's serious to me would have to be my life because right now I am going through a stage in my life where I have to think clearly and about what's going on in my life.

I have to be serious in order to become someone, because if I continue doing drugs and all of that stuff I will not go nowhere.

-Jonathan

From The Beat: Hey, young homie, that is some veteran's knowledge. How did you pick that up so young? Seriously, you are on the right track. Fortunately, you learned an old man's lesson at a young age, and can now move on.

It's Different

Today is a different from the way I used to live. I used to be stupid minded and not think before I act.

Today it's different because I process my thoughts instead of acting on my first thought. So it's getting me farther in life. I'm opened about change and want to change, and changing about a lot of things, except every day, it's harder to know that I'm a good person, because all my years of growing up I was tweaking, puttin' down. I never thought life would be so rewarding.

So I think I'm taking everything serious because I just be myself a keep it real.

-Albert

From The Beat: Each one teach one. Could you please let the folks around you know about how valuable it is to think before you act? You got some real good advice somewhere down the line. As the famous revolutionary prisoner George Jackson said; "life is powerless without the control of one's will, that means having determination."

Do It Or Don't

I take my life seriously. That is my purpose, to be here, to be living like my brothers always told me. If I'm gonna do something, or you are gonna do something, do it to the fullest.

I'm living life to the fullest. I fita be somebody, and that's something I learned at a young age.

-Mark Snow Flake

From The Beat: What would you say is more important: who you are or what you do? How will you find harmony between the two?

Bad Counselors Make Stuff Up

A bad counselor is someone who does not let you use the bathroom. A bad counselor is someone who makes up stuff to not let you out of your room. I hate bad counselors.

-Stan dizzy

From The Beat: These are some good examples. We heard a lot like this, but there has got to be more to it than that, right? Are these things that you have experienced? Are these the only differences you have experienced between good and bad counselors?

A New Man

Man, 90 days is a short amount of time.

Man, when I get out of this placement, Walden House, I am not goin' back to the same thing that I was doing. I am going to keep my head straight and be the young mane that my loved ones want me to be.

I am going to do my best and stay out of trouble.

-Stewart

From The Beat: We hope that in the future your "loved ones" influence is positive, and that they want you to stay free.

Strange Encounter

I had a really strange encounter on the 14th last week. It happened at my prom. I bumped into an old girl that I met with in the past, and I got caught by my girl.

Then after that day, they were at each other's neck. But it was a good thing that I solved it with her, 'cause if I didn't, they might still be at each other's neck. But good thing it's over now.

-Blue Demon

From The Beat: Was it worth it? Relationships are complicated at your age (and at ours!), not to mention how much harder it is not being free. Good thing it is over now. Lessoned learned, right?

It's Serious

To me life is serious, the way people live life. Death is serious. The way people live and die is serious.

I think that livin' life in and out the jail, pens, and even juvenile halls is serious. The repercussions of what people do is serious. I think if people take life and how they live serious, and stop living in the game, there won't be as much people incarcerated for petty stuff.

The laws are only getting more serious for people, especially us minorities. I think that serious.

-Space

From The Beat: Ain't that the truth! All we can say is that you are taking the right things seriously and you shouldn't get off track for no one.

A Good Counselor

I wanted to write about the counselors in my group home. Some of them have family problems and others problems. When they come to work they take it out on us.

The same with the counselors in the hall. What I think makes a good counselor is that they listen to you, and when they come work they don't take out their issues on the kids.

I think a good counselor should listen to what you have to say and shouldn't provoke you or bring up your issues. That's what I think is a good counselor. Because when they are a click to you it's kind of hard to run your program.

Jim

From The Beat: We hope that the staff who read your piece can take something positive away from it. You offer some powerful insight here, and we know that didn't come from any easy experiences while being locked up. Have you recommended any changes to the staff of your unit?

Haters

I am tried of all these haters
Why you haters wanna take what's mine
Why you haters wanna take my shine
Why you wanna take my shine and what's mine
When you haters know that I was on the grind
I've worked so hard for what I got
And you haters wanna take what little I have
I got one thing to say to you haters out there
Haters are gonna hate
And ballers are gonna ball..
So don't hate
Participate.

-Johnnie

From The Beat: What should they participate in? How was you "ballin?" We never knew a "Baller" who couldn't afford a lawyer to get them out of Walden House. "Don't hate" is good advice, but so is "Don't front."

Life

Life is like a dice game.
You don't know when you're going to crap out.
The system will play you if you don't get out,
so grow
Wisdom is the key to success, I know.

-Weezy

From The Beat: OK now Weezy, you got to come with something more original than that dice game line. Did you see that in last weeks Beat?

Car Racing Is Serious To Me

On a personal level, racing and cars is what I take seriously. I take racing and cars seriously because that's what I love, and when people mess with my car I will get heated.

I invest a lot of money into cars, and if someone messes with my car, they mess with my money. That's what I take seriously.

-Bryant

From The Beat: What kind of car are we talking about? Do you have your license? Why would you take your car more seriously than your freedom? You know a car ain't worth nada if you ain't free to drive it.

Welcome to. . . The Beat Without

YOUNG ADAM **With great pleasure we bring you a letter that was composed for The Beat Within by Young Adam, who wrote this piece for our Beat writing contest well over a month ago. We are sorry we missed his entry, but we are honored to showcase his story in this issue. Adam writes us from a youth correctional facility in Ohio. We hope to hear more from this articulate young man down the road.**

I just wanted to say sorry to them people I victimizeed 'cause I never got the chance

What Is It In My Life I Would Like To Do Over Again And How Would I Go About Doing It?

I've asked myself that question many times. I still haven't come up with the answer of what I would do, but I do know what I think about doing over.

First off, I would go back to the day I did my rime. As I think about it, I would usually say I wish I would've did the crime and gotten away with the stolen items, but as I sit in this institution in Ohio , I wish I would've never committed the crime. As I did my crime, I went from my house into the backwoods. I followed a long trail, about half a mile long, going through backyards. As I and my brother and two other boys crept through the trail, we came to pass a house. There was a gray dog outside barking. We paid no attention to its loud barking and kept on creeping through the trail. As we came up to a victim's house, it was silent and there was no one in sight.

I, and the other three kids, walked up to the house in a silent manner. As we approached the back door, it seemed safe. I, and my brother, walked-up to the back door. We broke the window to the door. My brother put his hand through the broken door and unlocked it. As he applied pressure to it, it cracked up a little. The crack was too small for my brother and the other two youth to fit through, but I was a small kid, so I easily fit through the crack.

I got in the house. I looked to see what was holding the door shut. It was a steel ladder. I slid the ladder from the door and my brother and the other kids got into the house. We walked through the kitchen and into one of the bedrooms. The lights were on in the bedroom, so we crept in and went through their drawers. We grabbed jewelry, stamps of value, money, and old collectable coins. We went through this bedroom and turned it upside down.

As we were finishing with that room, the phone rang, and rang, and rang. Then. It came to an abrupt stop. We were nervous from the phone ringing, but we continued what we were doing. As we exited the bedroom, we made our way to the next room. We walked in and turned the light on. We opened our eyes with amazement. There was a gun cabinet full of guns. We looked at the guns. There was about three shotguns, two rifles, and one BB gun standing up in the cabinet. I, and the other kids, pulled out our screwdrivers that we had brought with us. M brothers jammed the screwdriver into the bottom and broke the lock. I, with my quick hands, started to grab guns, more money, bullets, and more bullets and clips. The other three kids started grabbing, too. My brother grabbed the BB gun rifle, and began to shoot at the house. We grabbed all that we needed and began to exit the property. I, and the other kids' pockets were full with stolen property.

We were all nervous and scared. As we got off the porperty, we saw the same gray dog barking, but this time, there was a woman with the dog.

I started to run and the others followed. We got off the property and we began to look at our merchandise. I had a .38 Special, chrome-plated, and a .32. I had about eight boxes of ammunition.

My brother had a BB-gun rifle, and a BB gun pistol with a laser-point on it. The other two kids both had a baby nine with two clips.

We were all pleased with our lick, but not pleased with ourselves. We got away smoothly, but at 11:00 pm on that same day, we got arrested.

It seemed as if everyone hated us. My mother was disappointed in me, but it seemed as if I was disappointed in myself. I got put on probation after spending 30 days in my DH (Detention Hall?). They put an ankle monitor on me for two months .I violated about 4 to 5 times while on the ankle monitor and they put me back in the DH.

While locked up, my father passed away. I was angry and didn't know what to do.

I got out the DH and was doing good, though I got caught in the store stealing some blunts. They took me in an office and told me to call my mom, or they were going to call the police. I said my mom didn't have a phone, (she really did), so they called the cops and I got put in the DH again.

I didn't call my mom 'cause I knew she would be ashamed of me.

I was in the DH for about 90 days. Then, I got sent to Stepping Stones. I got put on transition and was doing good, but I failed drug tests. I did that for about eight months. Then, I had to stay until Monday for being bad.

That Sunday morning, I woke-up and my mom was there to pick me up. I left with her. She stopped the car in the middle of the road and told me my grandma died. I was hurting so bad. My mom then took me to the mall and I picked-up some classics.

I went to the funeral and then it came time for me to go back to Stepping Stones. A couple of weeks later they told me that I had failed my drug test and I was going to the DH, so I ran away for one month. While I was on the run, I smoked weed and drank. Then, it came to the point where I got caught.

I was up back in the DH where I stayed for two months. Then, I got sent up on September 5. I got to Syota on the 8th and two days later, I turned 14. I then got sent to Cuyahoga Hills where I've been for the last four to eight months.

To anyone that reads this, that's my criminal life, and that would be the one important thing that I would change. I just wanted to say sorry to them people I victimized 'cause I never got the chance.

As I close this letter, the most important thing to learn is "Laugh now, Cry later."

D-BOY ***Look who's back, yes in deed it's D-Boy, as he would say, I'm that "big fish in this small pond." The man has plenty of insight and wisdom, check it out! Yeah, you may or may not agree with his thoughts but at least he has the courage to spell out his ideas. D-Boy, once a participant in our workshops in 150, writes us today from the State Prison Correctional Training Facility in Soledad, CA. Look for more from this powerful young brother, as he nears his date to freedom.***

Rise And Shine

Hey! What is it? I'm fine, just on some ol' other. Just a big fish in this small pond. Matter of fact, that's what I'm writing about.

Me, personally, I'm lower-class, but I feel that I was designed for the upper class. I was born and raised in the heart of West Oakland. My mother worked two jobs and went to nursing school to feed three mouths. We had everything we needed, but only a few of the things we wanted.

Like they say, the rest is history, but I feel like this: Just because we came from the ghetto doesn't mean we gotta stay gutter. I've been living around poverty for so long now that I am starting to hunger for the finest things in life.

Ever since I was youngster watching my uncles have money, I've had that appetite. As I grew-up, I was always affiliated or surrounded by money. The money I was dealing with most would classify it as "hood rich."

Being "hood rich" is probably a hundred thousand or two, and a bunch of material things. By us coming from nothing, that is a lot of money to us, and we buy flashy things to let everybody know what the turf is worth.

Even though that isn't the wisest choice, I respect all y'all stunnas out there getting their shine on, but if we really analyze this situation, we'll probably all agree that the money we get out there and the material things we buy is really nothing at all.

This is just my personal opinion: But I feel we are all broke, not poor, but broke. The reason I say that is because the lil' couple thousand we be having, high-class people spend that on vacations. Who do y'all know in the game that is working with millions that you've seen with your own eyes?

I got big homies who everybody think is filthy rich. I'd be surprised if they had a hundred thousand. Most of 'em don't even own any property. They live in houses, but they don't "own" them. These are the dudes everybody want to be like: the ones with the Vipers, boats, jet skis, Benz's, etc. I say one out of ten of them are, I guess you can call them rich.

If we do our homework, high-class workers stay in mansions that cost millions, not even including what they have in their accounts.

Middle upper-class people, they are the ones in the cuts, in the mini-mansions. Middle-class people earn like $100,000 dollars a year. Lower-class people are like between $20,000-50,000 dollars a year.

If we look around our 'hoods, we will see people who have been working the same job for years. We will not see too many doctors, professors, surgeons, etc.

The things I just named are "careers" that pays for retirement. There's a difference between a "job" and a "career."

The problem with people that stay at one level in life is either they are not interested in a lot, or they live above their means.

99.9% of people out there in the game live above their means. We buy gold teeth, expensive clothes, weed, and we just spend money on things we can't afford.

Look at Asians, Chinese, Arabs, and a lot of other nationalities, they don't really buy all those things. You won't see them blowing money on all those material things.

Look at Mexicans: I'm talking about the ones in them stores, nail shops, and at them flea markets, best believe they're sitting on something fat, but you will never know because they "sacrifice."

Until we realize that we have to learn how to live, like what we are, rather than who we want to be, we will be stuck in one spot.

I learned to appreciate the finest things in life through a female. She was really "high-class," so she taught me about all the clothes, foods, colognes/perfumes, that life, period.

I'm gonna keep it real: If you really want to be stupid rich, I can't knock you because I do, too.

Some people don't care too much for riches and that's fine by me, but for those who do, let me tell you this: don't ever let anyone tell you that that's a wrong state of mind, because God put those things on earth for all who want it. People tell us money isn't everything and it isn't, but they have to realize that we were brought-up with nothing, so that's why we want it all. Some people say the house in the hills or surburb is being, or trying to be, like the white folks, but that is so untrue. Everything on earth is put here for reasons.

God made houses, Bentley's, all that good stuff, so it could be bought. To each his own, but there's a time, and a place, for everything. We can't live like bosses until we become bosses. Until then, we got to play our positions and be patient. Our time is going to come. At the same time, we gotta want it and have the knowledge to get it. It's going to be hard, but the harder we work, the more we chase it, and apprehend it. Just pick a career and stay focused. Do not give up or deviate from it until you accomplish your goal. That's why rich people are rich. It wasn't an accident. They were hungry, knew what they wanted and loved to do, and just did it. No looking back.

We got to find and recognize our talents, the ones we were blessed with. We all can't be rappers, actors, models, etc. That's what makes the world go round. We might have gotten put here to be that person who orchestrates behind the curtains away from the public's eye, like a film director or something.

You know it's always somebody you don't ever, ever, hear about, and they be the woman/man with the master plan. Look at Suga Slim from Cash Money? When was the last time you saw him in a magazine or on TV?

Bottom line is, and the moral of this literature is: just because we don't see, or personally know too many people that made it to be multi-millionaires, doesn't mean we can't. It is not impossible. That's what the system wants us to think. They want us to think that the closest we'll get to Hollywood is through television, but I'll tell you this: If we take the statistics' word for it, and not even try, then we'll assist the system with their plan. We can't be playing, laughing, and sitting around waiting on stuff to happen. We gotta do what we gotta do. We gotta get out there and make it come true, feel me? "And when the road gets hard, get hard on the road."

Out of all this chaos we've all been living our whole life, something is going to give. All our patnas are dead, but we're still here, and we're here for a reason. Let's let our past history be a stepping stone towards our future in a positive way. Whatever you do, just make sure you enjoy doing it. The quicker we start, the better off we'll be. Remember there's always going to be hard times, but we just gotta hustle and keep that vision: "Without the vision, the people will perish." I'm out. Holla!!!! We gotta be too legit to quit like whaaaatttt!!!

The Beat With Out

CECIL L. WEST

We want to give a B-I-G welcome to our new friend, who steps up huge as one powerful teacher/writer. We encourage you readers to give a good read to the following poems from Cecil L. West who writes us from the Jefferson Correctional Institution in Monticello, Florida. This man is no joke, he is determined to touch lives, and that he does with his initial poems that he sends to us. Plus, read Cecil's powerful commentary titled, "Victim's of Addiction," especially given we all are aware of how new drugs can take over whole communities and eventually devastate entire generations, we are reminded of the destruction the crack cocaine epidemic brought to our communities 20 years ago. Cecil West, makes clear that the consequences continue to destroy lives, while newer drugs begin their own destructive legacy. We are very excited to publish Cecil's work in The Beat. We are also very anxious to read an excerpt from his book, which he mentions in his letter to us. Bring it on Cecil! The Beat readership is hungry for more powerful game.

Hell On Earth

They say when we die, there's
A heaven or hell we must go
To.....sometimes I wonder if
That's true.

There's hell here on Earth.....
And it's been this way from
The day of our birth.
Nothing can change that....
We all know that's a fact

Children being born with diseases
Of all kind... It's been this way
From the beginning of time
Men killing men, seeking glory.....
Yes, life can be a very sad story.

In this world, only the strong survive....
It's a constant struggle for the weak
To stay alive... I've witnessed kids
Raised in houses that sold drugs....
'Cause the kids to live the lives of
Street thugs.

I've witness young girl turn to
Prostitution 'cause of the drug use... So
High not realizing they're the only ones being
Abused....Yes, "drug-dealers are the
One that are rightfully accused!"

It's all caused by money, greed
Hate....when you fall victim
They call it fate.

This is the world we live in
Suffering, hurt, and pain.....
We see it everyday again and again
While some continue to pray for a change.

It gets worse each and everyday....
No matter how much they continue
To pray.... This world was created to
Be this way. You continue to witness
Hell here on Earth...And the fact that it's
Constantly getting worse!

All our governments want to rule
The world....Even robbed Africa of
All its diamonds and pearls.... Africa
Was once the mother land...Created
By a mighty hand.

Now all countries are starting
To suffer "'Cause of all the hate,
Greed, racism, the list goes on and on.....
They want to be happy till this
Cruel world is gone!

Hell On Earth

Someone Cares

Someone cares 'cause they understand
And there's love in their hearts for woman
And man. It's true we live in a very cruel
World blinded by greed, hate, racism, and
So much more, "but the one's who care
Help to even the score."

Someone cares even if it's a stranger
From far away
"It was meant to be this way from the very first day
Some go through life thinking there alone,"
But they have shelters all over the world even
Family Group Homes.

Someone cares 'cause we're living in a
Very special world
"What's in your heart and minds is worth
Far more than diamonds or pearls
We were all created with a special gift to give
Most are blind 'cause of the way they live.

Some must search their hearts and minds for
The racism, greed, hate, and make a change
It will sooth your "soul" and that's more precious
Than a pot of gold. You will find that you're
Not alone and find joy in a kind word, a smile,
A touch, and realize so very much, That!!

For The Last Time

For the last time I've cried myself too sleep,
These feelings inside run so very deep.

All the beautiful times we have shared,
I knew within my heart you truly cared.
Long walks in the park,
Holding hands after dark.

These memories are very special to me.
I'll always love you,
Which you can plainly see.
Thinking of you day and night,
The loneliness in my heart is a constant fight.

All of the walks along the ocean shore holding hands
At those times I knew I was a very lucky man.
The times I've looked into your beautiful smiling face,
I knew no other woman could ever take your place.

Now that you're gone, I feel so alone.
As the tears run down my cheeks,
I write this poem.

CECIL L. WEST (cont.)

Victims Of Addiction

In 1984, a new drug was introduced into society that has led to an epidemic, and destroyed many families and good people.

I sat and watched Tony mix powder cocaine and baking soda. He then put some water in a pot and placed it on the stove to boil. Tony placed the cocaine and baking soda into a test tube and added some water and mixed it around until the cocaine and the baking soda turned into a residue. Then he placed the tube into the boiling water as he continued to swirl the tube in a circular motion, removing it every so many seconds until a white ball started forming in the tube. A touch of baking soda was added and the process was continued until a solid round white ball had formed inside the test tube.

Once the residue from the top of the water had evaporated, Tony started adding cool water as he continued to swirl the tube until every grain of powder cocaine and baking soda all became a part of the white ball inside of the test tube. "You see how clear the water is?" Tony said. "That means you brought everything back and there is no residue on the top of the water."

By the time the water had cooled and there was a solid white ball in the tube, Tony poured the water off, letting the white ball roll out of the tube onto the counter.

This drug is going to be a real moneymaker, and destroy a lot of good people. Free base and crack cocaine is the most evil of all drugs combined. As you continue to read you will see the truth in my words and realize that the true victims are the addicts themselves. 1984 is when freebase started really becoming known to society, and addicts starting falling victim to it

As I once snorted powder cocaine, smoking it was an instant rush that lasted no more than fifteen minutes. The rush was so great and intense that I could only want more! I had to have more just as so many other users that I have gotten high with. I've watched mothers turn their backs on their own children, whom they loved. It's the desire for another hit that pulls them into the life of suffering, hurt, sorrow and pain. I've observed addicts stay awake hustling the streets for more than fifteen days straight in order to get high on crack cocaine. I've seen addicts steal from their own parents and even their own children. Woman sell their bodies for one piece of crack cocaine with a street value of two dollars! Food stamps are sold while children go hungry and children have been sold for crack cocaine.

I've seen male and female sell their bodies regardless of the threat of AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. Addicts are so strung out that they develop blisters around their mouths from smoking crack cocaine through car antennas and copper tubing. Personal hygiene is forsaken for the pursuit of getting high, while blisters and sores develop on their bodies. Many cry out to God for help in stopping them from using crack cocaine. Addicts cry out because a loved one or friend introduced them to experimenting with crack cocaine. Crack cocaine simply took complete control of their lives.

Family members of the addicts fail to understand how something as small as a piece of rock cocaine could take control of someone's life. People have even started referring to crack cocaine pipe as the devil's dick. This is due to the tremendous power once you have taken a hit of crack.

I've witnessed addicts get into brutal fights over making a sale. They would buy a rock for ten dollars and then sell it for twenty or more to some white person coming to the ghetto to buy drugs. There is not even a care if the person they are selling to is an undercover cop or not. The only thing that matters to the addict is feeding their addiction.

Family's would feed the addict, but didn't want them staying under the same roof in fear that the addict would steal everything inside of the house. This is the case in many cases, but it is the weaker willed addicts that can't be trusted. They will sell their manhood and the women their souls. Many addicts rob, steal and have even murdered many good people in order to supply their habits. Once the drugs and money are gone, the addict is engulfed in guilt for their actions.

As time has passed, the drug epidemic has spread like wildfire, affecting many regardless of race or economics. Crack addiction can lead to unprotected sex, which increases he spread of AIDS and feeds the prison systems. Many prisons in the United States are housing 90% drug addicts. A crime was committed either to fund drug addictions or to sell drugs. The prison system is a multi-billion dollar industry and has our government blinded by greed!

Society's affluent are given lighter sentences or merely short stints at "treatment centers," while the more disenfranchised citizens are being sent to prison. This is not fair, but it is the world that we live in. Also, in black society, our kids are falling victim to the corruption as well. Reasons vary, although many kids have drug dealers as role models. These dealers sport expensive clothing and jewelry, and drive nice cars enticing the neighborhood youth. Children witness violence at an early age and on a regular basis. There is not much crime watch or recreational facilities to keep the kids active and on the right path. Kids that get caught up in the streets stop attending school as soon as they are old enough to make fast money for themselves.

The government is aware of this fact and that tons of cocaine are smuggled into this country each year; and we all know who owns the ships and the planes that these drugs are smuggled in on. Government officials are paid off and turn their heads to the problem while much of the drugs end up in t poorer communities. Everyone seems to be blinded by hate, greed, money and racism.

I'll paint you a perfect picture of why and how the black community is being destroyed by drugs, for every black man that is killed over a street corner or drugs, stops the growth of the community. Someone is killed while another is sent to prison for life, and therefore can never help to raise or bring out future babies. All of the drug dealing and addiction stifles the growth of the community. The government is aware of this fact and ultimately we all become victims of the addicted.

We need to clean up our streets and stop exposing our kids to the drugs, violence and corruption. We need a higher crime watch, more public libraries and additional recreational facilities. Big brother/sister programs and other programs involving professional people are needed, as well as programs where former addicts can share their experiences with others on the perils of drug use.

Once the government realizes that more prison beds is not the answer, maybe no one will ever experience themselves or another family member fall victim to crack cocaine, or any other drug.

The Beat With Out

NICK FLOYD ***The following two important pieces were written by our old friend and teacher Nick Floyd, who once shined in our workshops in the max three unit of 150. Currently Nick is still awaiting sentencing in Santa Rita County Jail, while he finds the time to write these honest pieces for The Beat readers whom he dedicates these most recent pieces to his old unit in Alameda County, as well as to all you readers in other Juvenile Halls. Read on!***

You Don't Want To Be Here

Dear Unit 3 of the 150-Crew and all the other juvenile facilities, it's me Nick Floyd writing to let you know how good you really have it in the Hall and in the juvenile system period.

In the Hall, you get three fat meals a day and seconds. On top of that, you get county treats and a store night. You guys also get to go outside everyday for large, muscle exercises and PE.

I understand too how you guys don't like being told what to do by the counselors, and you don't like the room time.

Well, here in Rita, if you don't do what your told, you will be locked-down for weeks to months, so a little hour of room time or a two or three day modified program is nothing.

The food they feed you is not even enough to get a one-year old baby full, not to mention how nasty it is.

We never get to go outside here. We're lucky to see sunlight once a month. I've been here two weeks and still no sunlight.

They can careless about your education There is not school here or any Beat Within workshops. You're lucky if you ever get to go to church.

People fight over the newspaper and telephones everyday.

Nothing in here is free and I mean nothing. You get no free wash-up bag.

You get new clothing and bedding once a week, not everyday like in the Hall. That means the same pair of draws for a week. You gotta do your own laundry in the sink or in the toilet.

Also, when I was in Juvenile Hall, I saw people sugar-coat a lot of things. They would call people "J-Cats" or "suckas." Well, if you call somebody a "J-Cat" in here, you will get jumped. A "J-Cat" in the adult system means you're either crazy or retarded.

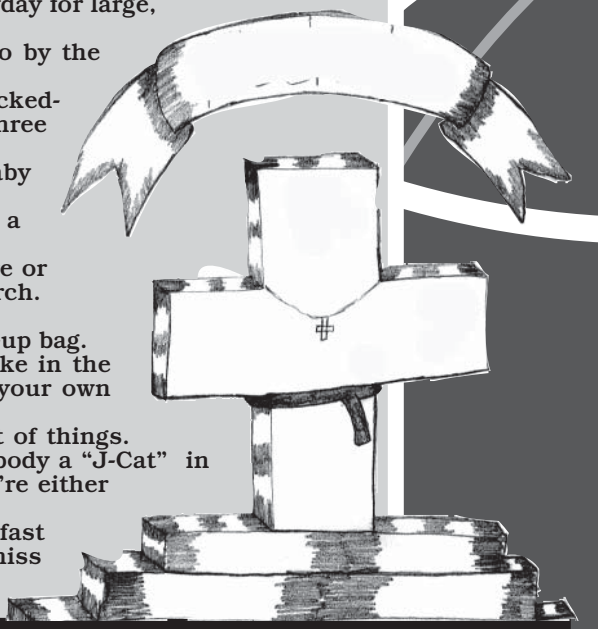
You have to wake-up at 3:30 or 4:00 am in the morning for breakfast and that's also when you get your half-rotten bag lunch. So if you miss breakfast, that's means no lunch, and dinner's not until 4:00 pm.

Also, for everybody in the pen and those going into the pen, starting in July, any money people put on your books, 55% of it is going to be taken for restitution fees. That means if somebody sends you $100 dollars, you're only going to get $45 from that $100.

I have OGs telling me everyday the pen is better than Rita (County) and this is coming from guys that have been there three to four times.

I'm telling you all it's nothing nice in here. Everybody in Camp and in the Hall, you all got it a million times better than we do.

My advice, do that little juvenile time, get out, and handle your business. You don't want to visit your family through a glass window or experience this filth, so handle your business.



You don't want to be sitting in here with me in the middle of the abyss.

The Abyss

I'm locked away in the center of demise
surrounded by people that hold so many silent cries.
Souls that are trapped in a circle of lies.
No more kissing and hugging the ones that you love.
It makes my heart feel like it's being hit with a slug.
Weap after weap, tear after tear.
God, please help me get my life in gear.
Please let me overcome all of my fears.
At times, I wonder which one is better:
incarceration or death?
This is a place that can make you feel like the book of Revelations
Always faced with trials and tribulations.
I'm sitting in my cell reminiscing and contemplating on my past,
asking myself how long does this darkness have to last?
I was the one who decided to live life fast.
Life is one big test all together.
One day it's all good and the next day you're going through thunder storms
and rainy weather.
When you're locked-up, you can't brush it off your shoulder like a feather.
I go through so much emotional pain.
Father in heaven, please answer my prayers
as I get down on my knees in the rain.
I will not let this place drive me insane.
No more trips down memory lane.
I'm telling you it doesn't get much darker than this.
You don't want to be sitting in here with me in the

SUNMAN'SLIGHT ***From his experience as a prisoner for more than half his life, starting with his incarceration in the California Youth Authority fifty years ago and continuing right up until his current imprisonment at Salinas Valley State Prison, our old friend SunMan'sLight shares his considerable expertise about the abuse that defines our criminal justice system. Convinced that the abuse will never end, and that the public will never care, he argues powerfully for a simple notion: each one of us can make our future better or worse, depending on our own, individual choices.***

Decision Making Time

One must only question the content of a prisoner's character to keep a society from caring.

I think with each passing day, week, month, that I edge closer to the reality I fight a battle nearly impossible to win,

First I learned of GB, an American military prison inside Cuba where even the most basic human and legal rights are denied those incarcerated as "enemy combatants" by our American government.

Later, I heard of the torture and abuse of those prisoners which was somehow justified when it could be, excused when it could not be, denied when at all possible, and human sacrificial offerings made when all else failed. "Business as usual," we refer to it.

(What is it about prisons that have always drawn those to work inside of them who enjoy abusing the incarcerated? Melvin Belli, a famous defense attorney, once said, "If you want to see the scum of the earth, watch the changing of the prison guards.")

Yesterday, I listened to a television news program. I heard about the systematic sadistic abuse of Iraqi prisoners inside prisons there by "Iraqi's liberators:" — American soldiers who sodomize, torture, and then explain, "It's not our fault. We were just following orders." (So said Nazi war criminals.)

Following, in the very same news program, was a media outcry, "Prisoners are being coddled. Oregon inmates get to watch flat screen television panel as incentive for good behavior." Shame on treating inmates like human beings.)

In response to the abuse of Iraqi prisoners are familiar denials, and excuses resounding by government and military officials in Washington. Brig. General Janice Karpinski tells the world, "I had no idea this was going on. I was not on site. I was in charge of seven prisons and I delegated responsibility for the care of these prisoners to my staff."

Mark Kimmitt, Deputy Director of Coalition Operations, speaking for the military, shares with us that, "… procedures and practices are being implemented that will assure the abuse of these prisoners will end. We will open every door, turn over every rock during this ongoing investigation… We are certain these incidents are isolated."

Sound familiar? I seem to recall these very same statements in response to reported abuse inside the California Youth Authority and Adult Corrections system.

In my mind, even more damning and telling for the incarcerated was the statement by a woman to a television news reporter: "They deserve everything they get. Look what they did with the bodies of Americans they killed over there." That statement voiced the thought and feeling of many like her who believe wrong makes right.

Could this be why the California Department of Corrections has been able to survive though it has been proven to abuse, murder and torture those placed into its care?

Recently a district attorney and the California Attorney General confirmed what I, and many like me, have constantly accused our justice system of, and that is it protects its own. The beatings of two young men inside the California Youth Authority caught on tape, "… is not enough evidence to obtain a conviction," so said they.

Instead of presenting it to a jury, and letting its members decide the evidence, the district attorney and attorney general chose not to. Why? Did they fear others would see it differently, and hold the state accountable fore this abuse?:

After giving it considerable thought, I can figure no other reason they would not, at the very least, submit it to a Grand Jury, just as they did recently in the Michael Jackson abuse case without a video tape.

I am left asking: If this, and the many other events caught on tape in recent years, does not sway and reform, how can words written upon paper do so? If all that has come to light proving widespread systematic abuse inside our penal institutions will not bring about the end of it, then what will?

The answer to that question comes too late for me and many others. Whatever our choices from here on, we shall live our lives out inside this abusive system.

But they will work for most who read this.

Each of you has the choice in your behavior. Each has the choice to follow society's rules which will ultimately determine if you give over the power to someone else to do with you as they will. You can, with all you have experienced to this point in your life — the negative and the positive — take back the power and never again make a decision that will return it to the "the system."

I am more convinced now than I have ever been that the ability of the Department of Youth and Adult Corrections to convince the panic-stricken, frightened general masses that they are all that keeps society safe will always be so. This leaves it up to each person, individually, to make the decisions that will dictate if their life is, or is not, controlled by someone else. Until that is realized, a system is in place that preys upon helpless troubled men, women and children, and each of us must find our own way out.

Each can hope there is a system beyond the walls and fences that will be there to assist those who want to be productive, whose lives are so troubled it will be difficult at best without assistance, understanding and compassion.

But, what if such a system does not exist? Does that mean I will fail? No! It will remain your choice, your decision. With real strength and character you can decide your own destiny. But, if you are a follower, someone else will decide it for you.

If you do not take the first step in that journey now, the alternative is that your experience while incarcerated will consume and destroy, with rare recourse toward healing.

I am serving four life sentences (plus 100 years)! One of the three major reasons for this is when I was in the California Youth Authority no one told me that I could rip that power over my life out the hands of my keepers if I made the right choices then — not later.

Very possibly, though, because I was not very bright, had someone told me, I likely would have been too into feeling sorry for myself, and too busy blaming everyone else for my misery and suffering, to listen. I can but hope you never get that busy.

Always be aware, no matter what your situation is right now, you will make it worse or better by the choices you make. If you get a little busy feeling sorry for yourself, remember what Abraham Lincoln said: "I once felt sorry for myself because I had no shoes until I met a man with no feet."

CHOOSE TO LIVE, NOT EXIST!

The Beat With Out

FREDY GARCIA

Fredy Garcia, aka Trucho, has a very loving mother, probably one of the reasons he has such a loving heart. Fredy's been a Beat contributor since his days at San Francisco's Youth Guidance Center, and we've always been impressed by his honest thoughtful writing. He's been in CYA's DeWitt Nelson for a long minute, but he's convinced that his head is now in the right place to finish his program and make it on the outs. We hope you enjoy his tribute to mothers and this country.

Trucho's Quick Update

What's up, Beat? You know who this is, the one and only Trucho from the Mission District. I'm just writing a few lines from the "Y." It's been a while since I wrote to y'all, but I haven't forgot.

Well, I've been at the "Y" for two-and-a-half years, and it's been a crazy ride. I was supposed to get out about a year ago, but I caught some time. This place isn't cool; you'll just waste your youth away. When you come to this place, don't get me wrong, you can learn a lot of things and better yourself, but you can do it outside this place, too. There's always a good side and a bad side to everything, but in YA, it seems there is more of the bad side, you know what I'm saying.

To y'all in Juvenile Hall, don't wait till you come to YA to change. You got to have a strong state of mind to not feed into the negativity that goes on around here. It's hard, and once you come to YA, it's hard to get out and stay out. I'm sure, while learning the hard way. But I'm no one to tell y'all what to do. I'm just givin' a little bit of advice. Take it or leave it, but anyways . . . I'm about to cut this short. It was just a quick Q-vo to The Beat. To y'all in the halls, camps, and programs in the community, stay up and try to take a little out of it. It's going to help you in the long run. To y'all in The Beat,

Donna and David, q-vo. Alrato.

America Values

The United States of America, the land of the free
The place in America
where people from other countries flee
The country where you are able to express your voice
The United States of America,
where everybody has a choice
In this land where its people have constitutional rights
Full of people of different colors,
browns, blacks, yellows, and whites
A nation where South and North were in rivalry
The States where a civil war was fought to abolish slavery
The land for what millions have died
to achieve their dream
So that one day their descendents
can express their opinion to the extreme
The nation that's looking for terrorists to engage in a fight
In order to maintain peace and its people not to be in fright
Other nations hate us because of our freedom, and think we are insane
The problem is they don't understand
we are trying to help, and that's our reputation
This world would be a living hell if we were in isolation
We don't go to other countries to take away your land or to terrify
Our nation is just trying to keep peace and for your life to glorify
Look for our way of living, you won't find it anywhere
Where we live in peace and no one gets treated unfair
The nation where we don't get told how to speak, live or what to wear
The United States of America,
where of your government you don't have to be scared.
Even though we look bad because it seems we got into an unnecessary war
It all gots a purpose, all we're doing is trying peace to restore
So remember who we are and be proud of the home of the brave
Thank God for giving you this life and for it to be saved
Be proud to be an American and to live in this land
To be free, express you opinion and to know where you stand
To have such values and our voice to expand

A Mother's Love

There is nothing holier
in this life of ours than our mother's love.
A love so great that can't be understood except by the man above
A mother's love that's so faithful,
a love that makes you joyful.
Loyal, understandable,
caring and righteous is just to say
The few ways a mother's love can be displayed
She is always there for you at times when you're afraid.
Her love for you is so intense
that she doesn't expect to be repaid.
Her touch, her look, her voice is just so sweet.
There is no other woman on earth that can compete
To think of her makes you feel so relieved
Because you know in you she believes
You could be a criminal or you could be insane
But you mother's love with you will always remain.
She's been there since you were first fed.
She will be there till the day you are dead.
There is no better feeling than the feeling of your mother's kiss.
If you ever lose her,
you'll understand what it is that you miss.
She's the person you go to when you need advice.
She knows you inside out, from her you can't disguise.
Our mother is the only person that can never be disrespected,
Even if you did, you will never be neglected.
Our mother is the only person that will always be real,
Her kindness, love, sweetness, loyalty,
and caring is the real deal.
She's the only person that knows our weakness,
And she's the only one who knows our trueness.
Our beautiful mother, our beautiful queen,
The only person to us will never be mean.
Our beautiful mothers should be honored in every possible way,
For that, to all the mothers I say today,
"Happy Mother's Day."

all we're doing is trying peace to restore

The Beat With Out

HERMAN THOMAS JOHNSON

Herman Thomas Johnson drops us some deep commentary about the current situation in the United States and around the world. You may not agree with everything he says, but he'll definitely have you thinking. Feel free to send comments his way. Herman writes us from Corcoran State Prison in Corcoran, California.

Out, Not Insiders, Control United States

On January 29th 2004:

It may be hard for many people to accept, but clearly, if we are to move forward, we must come to understand that our America is controlled by outsiders not insiders. It is ruled, not by the people, as advertised, but rather, by a conglomerate, which has its key players tied into the trilateral commission: The World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Masons and the Club of Rome, and other equally devious societies.

Look at both of the Bush administrations, as well, as the Al Gore and Clinton administrations who took their orders from outsiders, not the people of the US.

Trust me, these associations pose as benevolent groups, but are in reality engaged in violence, terrorism and deceit in order to impose their will on America and on the rest of the world. Now as you can see, the war of President Bush's administration was only about two things, (1) Iraqi President Saddam Hussein put out a contract to have former President George WH Bush assassinated while on a visit in Kuwait in 1993; (2) Our now President George W. Bush was out to kill Iraq's President Saddam for his big oil and for trying to kill his father.

Now you have to realize that the first week our now president was in office, he and his administration was getting ready to start a war, which he has done. So the Untied States Army's soldiers has Saddam locked down within the US while about 500 soldiers of the Untied States were murdered so far.

Now, these organizations are operated by a number of overly wealthy families — bankers, religious leaders and businessmen — whose ideology is based in white supremacy, the use of force, genocide and worldwide dictatorship. They worship the green god by whatever name.

You all have to know that both the vice president and President Bush have oil and they want to be in control of the oil around the world. Trust me. They work in concert with the devil and fund both the left and the right, the Democrats and the Republicans, ever so secretly playing each other. We all know that it doesn't matter who wins an election in the America of 2004, because both sides are controlled by the wealthy, not the poor, of America. It is the same in all these other countries, too.

In my last writing, I poiinted out how the so-called authorities have me locked down and the so-called independent African nations are under control of the World Bank and International Monetary Funds, and within 2002 and 2003 , there were many lawsuits filed against many companies who have something to do with slaves in January 2004 in New York courts. And indeed, many of the lawsuits were dismissed. This will not be the first time. Trust me.

Well, so is America. Our national debt keeps us under control, just as the African nations are kept under control. By controlling our government and many other governments and by keeping them in debt, the dictators are getting closer and closer to taking over the world using our tax dollars and our military, while we sit behind the TV.

Now people, be smart. You see what took place in 1963 with John F. Kennedy and Robert R. Kennedy, and as John John Jr. All three were murdered by insiders and outsiders because they couldn't be controlled by the so-called wealthy people. So what will we do this time, fight back or become slaves within our own country? Or prisoners in US camps?

The plan is called Global 2000. It is a long-standing white supremacist plan that adopts war, holocaust and starvation as its chief means of reaching its goal, which is to eliminate 3 to 4 billion black people in the years to come, along with poor white people and poor Mexicans and take full dictatorial control of all the peoples of the world. It has already orchestrated the taking of millions of lives by creating poverty, hunger and war in such third-world countries such as Vietnam, Cambodia, Granada, Rwanda, Sudan, Biafra, El Salvador, Nigeria, South Africa, Iraq, Iran, Brazil, and Somalia to name a few. Trust me, the list goes on and on.

It does create disorder in these nations by entrapping the people into accepting European materialism. This in turn creates economic dependency on the enemies. The enemies then use the fomenting of civil war, outright murder and assassination as well as political manipulation to control the natural resources and means of production. Thereby keeping the people in the targeted lands needy and divided. Always blaming each other instead of the real enemy.

Yes, you can go back to 9.11 in New York. Over 2600 people killed by using our own planes and you have our President Bush blaming Iraq. Do we really need more of our people dying because of a piece of crap president claims our people have been threatened by Iraq, which was all know was a lie? I do hope you agree. Look, our people need schools, jobs, money, but look, our own President Bush has given over 150 billion dollar to other countries to use and he has not given our families nothing but more dead bodies.

This plan for the establishment of a worldwide dictatorship in conjunction with global 2000 has been given a name designed to trick even the aware. It is called democracy. Any time you hear the damn so-called news media say that another nation has accepted "democracy." you know that the worldwide dictatorship has moved in.

"Peace," "love," "respect" are other code words of the international conglomerate. When we hear on the news that so and so is on a "peace mission" or is taking a "peace" initiative, you know he is out doing the work of the international dictatorship. To them the word "peace" merely means they are holding a gun at someone's head, forcing them to comply. This what happens to the good old Kennedy's families. Yes, our former President Johnson was a part of grateful President Kennedy death.

In summary, we do not control our own country nor our own elections. The power is vested in monied outsiders. It is they who control the government, not us. The first step in taking control of our own damn destiny is it to understand and acknowledge what is actually happening. Then we as the people will be empowered to put these green God worshippers where they belong.

The Beat With Out

DARNELL M. HOLYFIELD

The consistent Darnell M. Holyfield is back in the pages of the BWO, and this time he takes on politics. As most everyone in this country knows, this is an election year, and if you can vote, you really should vote, it's so important. Remember, if you're in California, you can vote once you're off parole or probation, even if you have a felony. This is even true in Texas. We urge you all to have opinion and voice this opinion at the ballot box. Darnell writes from the Sierra Conservation Center California State Prison in Jamestown, CA.

Political Strategies

Is it me or does it seem like politicians are always focused on the poor communities? I know in the political world a good percentage of those who are fortunate to be put into office make a lot of false statements and fake promises to the minorities. To me, it seems that they all focus on the minority's communities and votes until they are put into office. I mean, we as minorities haven't had one person in the last twenty years in any political office to really help us. But we continue to vote for the one who tells us the best lie, or the one who we think is going to keep the promises that they made to us. I see a lot of those who are in office using their political power to play political games. And by the time the voters and the public gets wind of it, they are coming on national TV giving a nationwide apology for whatever it was that they may have done.

I am also familiar with the author of the "Pale White Horse," Mr. William Cooper, who spoke on some of the things that politicians, do before his life was taken like he said it would be for exposing the truth. But some of the things that he spoke about in his book about our government and politics, we are witnessing to this day. They have come out to be true. Coincidence? I think not. I think for the United States to be so powerful, how is it that a professional high-class call girl disguised as an intern penetrated the security of the secret service to have an affair with a president of this country? Could the Republican Party have set him up? Who knows, but it just seems strange that this type of thing could happen in this great, powerful country.

In 2002 after the World Trade Center was attacked, a radio station let Jesse Jackson from the Democratic Party publicly announce that President George W. Bush knew about the attacks before they happened and had done nothing to prevent it from happening. This also came out to be true later, that he knew that they would maybe attack the targets that they did.

These are some of the strategies, games, and secrets they play in politics, Rev. Al Sharpton stated that "we as minorities are used as guinea pigs by the Republican and Democratic Party" when it come to politics. And this may be true to some extent because most of the time, the politician with the most minority votes wins the political race he/she is running and is put into office. Even today we are seeing an ex-Chief National Advisor for the US, Richard Clark, from the Republican Party, tell some of the secrets that President George W. Bush was trying to hide. Some say that it is for personal gain because of the book that he wrote, but who really knows? When it come to politics, we all have to really look at the person who we are voting for and pray to God that he/she is going to do all that they can do for us as minorities once they get into office. And even then we are sometimes let down. The bottom line is no one can really control a politician or know their hidden agendas or strategies until they are caught or they are somehow put out there.

In the United States, we all have the right to vote or not to vote if we choose, even though some may say that we as minorities need to start exercising that right. I also think that people with a felony on their record should be allowed to vote in this country because most of them are minorities. To me, it is very important for us as minorities to know all that we should know about the person we are voting for, because in a sense, we are not only trusting that person to do the things that he/she said that they would do. But a person that is voted into any political office is bound by law to do the job that he/she was voted in to do. And if the voters of that state are dissatisfied, they can file for a recall and get that person out of office by voting all over again, and that just happened in California to Governor G. Davis. The fact is that we are all human beings and none of us are perfect, so even politicians are bound to let you down at one point or another.

Me, myself, I try to pay attention to politics as we all should, because when we vote for these politicians, these are the people that we put in charge of this country. Lies, deceit, murder, wars, corruption, blackmail, false imprisonment, booby traps, and people getting framed or just some of the games that are played in politics. These are parts of their strategies and most of the politicians play right along with the games that are played, and those who don't indulge are not in politics that long. I was told the only good politician is the one that is retiring or the one that is retired, because he/she has seen and done it all and at some point got tired of it all and said it was time to go. That, to a certain point, for me has come to be true, because human beings are going to lie and do whatever they have to do to keep their jobs. And to me, that is what politicians do to stay in office, that is part of politics and their political strategies.

Thy Lord And I

You've seen my days and nights before, my Lord, your will is true, for you're fair. On my knees I pray for your approval, for your love I cherish, and your strength no man/woman could bear.

My Lord is most merciful, though powerful as the seas as he parted for one man to stand. He spreads his love so kindly and gracefully, as he gives us all light with just one hand.

You are the sun, the omega and forever my Lord, for without you, no man/woman would exist. For you gave us all life from the image of you, but you warn us not to cherish it.

Thy Lord is my night, my shepherd, my savior and all should fear his anger. For thy name is what I call when I'm safe and happy, and at times when I'm in fear of danger.

For your guidance I pray, for your wisdom I seek, for your word I live to die. Neither kings nor princes, neither earths nor planets could separate thy Lord and I.

The Beat With Out

GEORGE BOUIE

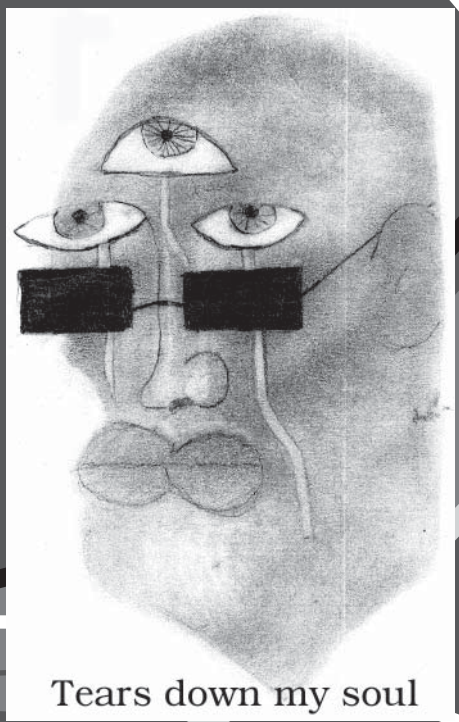
When we get writing from CYA, we know it is a real act of faith since the state's kiddie prisons (YA) won't allow The Beat Within to grace their institutions. Thus, George Bouie, IV — whose Beat name is Geezy Baby — has not been able to read what he writes for The Beat since he went to the Y. Every one of his pieces should serve as a warning to young men and women who still have the power to make the choices that will keep them out of this place that's set up to add time to your sentence, and where nobody cares. Of course, some of us do care. George cares, which is why he hopes you don't follow him.

Dear Beat

What's up Beat? It's George up here in CYA doing what I need to do to come home.

For everybody out there in the halls, do what you need to do to go home because the Y is no place to be. When you come up here you don't have a name no more, you got a number. Me, I'm YA#89488 because I made a mistake and let my anger get the best of me.

Well I'm working and trying to graduate a year early, so everybody out there locked up, think about your next move before you take it. Thank you Beat for everything.



Tears down my soul

State Of Mind

Now, the state of mind that I'm in
It's hard to think
Being around gang members it's hard to blink
What I think about here no one cares
And no one knows about my family affairs
How it's hard to deal with the situation I'm in
Here this is crazy
Where men and boys are here to play
Fights and riots every day
The gas they throw will make you choke
And believe me, it's no joke

Now, the staff's here
It's not like the halls
They don't give a damn about your problems
And don't have a shoulder you can lean on
They come and do they job and leave
They don't care if you fail or succeed
But long as you don't talk or fight you will do all right

But how many people can really do that?
Everybody in here is human and that's a proven fact
So it's guaranteed you will make a mistake
And when you do the consequences wont be so great
Because it's set up that you mess up, with all the clicks and gangs

So think about your situation and freedom
Before you commit yourself to CYA

No More Window Warriors

I been locked up in CYA since December 31, '03
I seen 137 fights and one riot
Most of you window warriors wouldn't survive it
Jaw jackin' don't work in the Y
Because you sleep next to your enemies with one open eye
Say the wrong thing, there goes a fight
Going to lock up for just one night
Then when you come back and his friends feel played
There goes three more fights because his friends want to fade
After so many fights your time gets so long
Until the age of 25 you're not going home
Now you go from Preston to Chad
because you thought Jaw Jackin' was the #1 Fad
So if you learn something from this poem
Learn that Jaw Jackers and
Window Warriors never go home
Change your ways unless you love
to fade

Pass Your Love

Take your time, don't be in a hurry
I don't want your love to come and go
Now that we're so close, I don't want anything to stop our flow
We been moving smooth for the past four years, I don't want your love to go
But if you feel it's the best thing for you, I don't want to stop your flow
If you want to leave and go on the road
Do yo' thang
But don't be mad when you see your friend on my strang
Arm, that is, walking down the street when I'm free
Because girl, oh now don't forget, you already had me
But you lost me for the simple fact you didn't pass your love.

Change your ways unless you love to fade

The Beat Without

RENE ARAGON

Our friend and colleague, Rene Aragon, wrote several more good pieces, and we're sorry it's taken us so long to get them into the pages of The Beat Without and out to you. She shares some serious knowledge about friends and loved ones, and even sends props The Beat's way. Thanks, Rene.

Eight Questions But One True Answer

Why do you run with your crew?
Is it because you think it's cool or just something for you to do?
Why is it that you need to be gang affiliated?
Is it because you think these guys can give you what you need?
Do you think these guys look at you and see someone that they can love, someone that they can be with when it gets tough?
No! They see a piece of meat, someone that they can even beat and mistreat
They talk about being down for you
and being the only one
But on the low they're creepin' with the next one
They rep their block 'cause it's cool?
But I see a fool, wasted talents, abilities, and something that's true
But don't be fooled,
it's not just the guys but it's the girls, too
Walking around with their head all up in the sky,
thinking that they're so fly
Wearing their colors and walking around the block
thinking that they're boss
Knowing that they just been tossed
To be down they had a train pulled
Is that what you need to do in order
to run with your "friends?"
In order to gain respect?
I don't understand why males and females do this
'cause in the end, they don't have their "friends,"
their gang, or even the respect
they thought they had gained
Please don't degrade yourself
for something that's so fake
Be cool, but don't be a fool, run with your friends, but make sure they're true
But most of all be true to yourself
Don't be down for a color or a block
'cause they'll turn their back on you when you drop
And to think I wanted to run
with this same crew to be true

Intro To My Piece

The piece you are about to read has been said to be an inspiring one. It's about the truth that many people, mainly females, don't want to realize. It's titled "Eight Questions But One True Answer," and as odd as this title may be, there are eight questions in the poem that you need to answer, but no matter what those answers may be, the one true answer is to be true.

To the females, hold your head high and realize you are worth more than a toy for a boy. To the males, realize that the female that you hurt the most, you mistreat, and you call names is the one female that in the end will be there for you no matter what you do. This intro or even my piece may not make any sense to some readers, but only to the readers that think like me they understand.

So enjoy my piece! Later Days.

Mother's Day Without My Mom

You know, I had this whole day planned out as to what we were going to do for Mother's Day. I really didn't know what to get my mom, because I couldn't afford all the bling-bling that she always had. My college education was around her middle finger alone, ha, ha, ha.

Anyways, my plan for this special day was to get up in the morning and my brother and I would take her to breakfast, wherever she wanted to go of course. All my mom asked of us on any special day, including Mother's Day was that we be nice to each other and for me to help with the laundry. Yes! She even did laundry on Mother's Day. Anyways when it came to dinnertime we would probably take her to The Cheesecake Factory, in fact, I can bet that's where we'd go. She liked that place, but hated the wait and we all know that my mom was the most impatient person in the world. Whoever didn't pay for breakfast would probably pay for dinner . . . me. The night would end with a cake, chocolate of course, that read "Happy Mother's Day," and we'd give her any presents that we bought for her.

It's amazing that I thought that far ahead, but now I wish I hadn't, because I got my hopes up. I wanted this Mother's Day to be different, and I don't know why. Maybe it's because after losing my grandpa, uncle, and my grams getting really sick, I realized how precious life is and how precious those who love us are. Although I was working, I thought about her all day, I mean, it was kind of hard not to, because everyone that knew asked if I was okay. Sometimes I just want people to forget about me and let me keep on going on with the happy smiley face I have, like everything is okay even though it's not. My smile is a mask of my pain.

I thought about my mom so much that I started getting mad. Mad at the fact that May 9, 2004 (Mother's Day) is the four-month "anniversary" of her death. Mad at the fact that she left. Mad at the fact that she left and she took most, if not all, of my father with her. Just mad at everything and everyone.

I leave you with this: "Love people and use things, don't love things and use people." Later Days.

Letter To The Beat

Yo, I just want to give many props to The Beat Within for what they do. I don't think they are given enough props sometimes from for all the work that they do. They have given you youth a voice that at one point was never heard because you youth were locked up. I believe to some extent that The Beat has changed the life of some people. I've been with The Beat way before I started working for them. I would read Beats when my mom brought them home and I would wonder who these people were that were typing and responding. Now I know . . . Arlene M, Donna, Dave, Keir, Matt, and so many others.

I just wanted to write this to give you guys some of the props that you deserve and for putting up with all my stuff, especially Matt, you're cool. Big up to B5 and GU for the things that they do, most, if not all, are there because they really enjoy their work. Young Shriek, keep your head held high and remember there's always a bright light at the end of the tunnel. Later days.

JEFFREY ROTH

We can scarcely imagine being sentenced to 25-50 years at the age of 18, but that is the sentence Jeffrey Roth began 22 years ago! Writing The Beat for the first time from a Colorado State Prison, JR sends, along with the letter introducing him, two poems that speak to the life of perpetual imprisonment — the loss of family on the outs, the loss of friends on the ins, and the reflection the mirror casts back in his direction.

Prison Man

To a man inside
these walls so grey
Without a trace of light,
Today's the same as yesterday
And both as dark as night.
You ask about tomorrow, well,
It'll be the same as all the rest have been.
I'll get up, exist another day,
Then go back to sleep again.
I've seen one man
take his own life,
Another just lay down and die.
I guess that they
just couldn't stand
The loneliness inside.
They say we have no feelings,
That we don't laugh, hurt, or cry
But you could flood
a mighty river
With the tears that have filled these eyes.
I thank heaven for my mother who sat
weeping
With a picture in her hand.
It's a picture of her only son,
A lonely prison man.
I've never turned away
a hungry man
Or refused anyone a ride.
I've laughed with
those around me,
And hurt when people cried.
You may think we're different,
That you're not the same as I
But one day you'll see the trip's the same
It's just a different train we ride.
You might think I'm bitter,
That's really not the case
I hold no hate for any man
I see some good in every face.
And I don't want your pity
For I'm the one to blame.
And when once again I walk among you
I won't hide my face in shame!

when the struggle becomes too great I see that dam break A flood streaming down his

Growing Old

Each day I painfully look into his eyes
And see death slowly claiming him
Breathlessly he runs...
Trying to hide, Yet...
Persistent as a fox after a hare
It chases him.

Too stubborn to just give up
I see him struggling to survive
I hear his lungs gasp for that
Life giving force
I feel his chest holding back his
Strong heart's beat
Like a dam holding back a raging river

And when the struggle becomes too great
I see that dam break
A flood streaming down his cheeks
I find it harder to look at him
So I try to turn away
But every cell has mirrors.

Dear Beat Within

First of all, allow me to introduce myself. I am Jeffrey A. Roth, an inmate in a Colorado Sate Prison. I am 42 years old, and have been in prison since 1982. I have served 22 years so far on a 25-50 year sentence for a murder that happened during a burglary when I was 18.

Over the last 22 years, I have lost my great grandparents, my grandparents, and my parents, who have all died. My sister came to visit for the first ten years or so ago, but now she doesn't answer my letters any more. I guess it just became too painful for her. I guess what I am trying to say is I really enjoyed the issue you sent to me, but as I have no one on the streets to help me pay for the cost of a subscription... I earn $9.60 a month working in the greenhouse... I don't know anyone here who receives your publication or I could maybe borrow theirs.

I am enclosing two poems for you to use if you want. If you like them, let me know and I will send more. I have written quite a bit over the years. I go by the nickname JR.

ERNESTO SANTANA

We warmly welcome Ernesto Santana to the pages of The Beat With. From the note and the poem which follows, it sounds to us like we have yet another powerful writer/ teacher to learn from in these pages. Ernesto definitely has goals for himself. WE truly hope he doesn't get off the path towards fulfilling his dreams as a writer. With that said, we do hope Ernesto continues to utilize our publication with his work, and that soon his dreams will be a bit more fulfilling.

A Note

I received your address as a resource to my writing potential. A place to submit my written material with the hope it gets published.

My name is Ernesto. I'm 26 years old, trapped in the belly of the beast. I write toxic, cultural and emotional lyrics. I recently started writing poetry. I'm currently working on a book called brown palace. My goal is to have 2 musical albums, lyrics, ready for the studio and 1 poetry book ready for publication. I'm well on my way in achieving this goal.

Hopefully you can assist me on this venture. I'm submitting one poem which is a reoccurring dream.

And Darkness

Here's a surreal moment:
My beloved enemy, with a dull smile
On his face and bloated emptiness in
His eyes
Rounding the corner in a fly
'64' Impala
Pointing an angry AK-47 at
Me.
Then, extreme, slow motion:
As barrel flashes find their mark
In my torso and
Head.
My lifeless body hits the turf.
Face down
No breathing!
No heart-beat!
Just another lost soul
Trapped in a corpse
And darkness.

RICHARD RUIZ ***Richard Ruiz, an old school Beat writer drops some game on us this week in our Beat Without section. He actually submitted this entry for our contest on, "If You Had The Chance To Do One Thing Over Again, What Would You Do?", but we didn't get the opportunity to enter it on time and we sincerely apologize. We hope everyone reading this will take heed to what Richard is saying. Richard writes to us from the Pelican Bay SHU.***

Decision Making

Greetings Beat Within once again you all have etched another's intriguing inquiry to the long loved history of a fabulous publication for our youths as I went on to read the question for this competition. Also, you all mentioned the obvious aspects in life that one would love to repeat in life. And yes, I agree 'cause most of us all would love to redo our first steps into the notorious gang life, drug life, and yes this would simplify the competition. So, as for me a 36 year-old man, I had to dig deep into my past and unravel the blunder of my nostalgic moments that I wish I could repeat for the sake of love, feelings and the relationship.

Please be aware that I have no regrets to any experiences in my past, 'cause these sacred experiences are my best teachers for my future outside of these concrete walls. To regret something in your past life, is to be bitter within yourself, as to hold a grudge. And how a person interacts within himself or herself. So I regret nothing, and appreciate life and what it governs as I express my sincerity on my personal life. I merely do this for my precious daughter, in hopes she comprehends that I love her today as I loved her when she was born. The experience in life that I would love to do all over would be; "show I mentally directed my decisions and finalizations."

See, it all started around 1985; I was like seventeen, still a teenager and indulged in the gang life and being a playboy, trying to romance every young lady that gleamed with beauty and along the shoreline I was blessed, and greeted like the footprints in the sand by a young brown Chicana that went by the beautiful name; Lydia. She was a year younger than me. We discussed about sharing our intimate feelings, and smiles. So one day I went to her job, and I greeted her with a glass vase with 12 red roses that symbolized my love for her. I asked her for her hand and she replied with smiling faces, a hug and a juicy buss filled with much enthusiasm. Of course she said; "Yes!" We both agreed to enjoy each other's lives. And from then I was like the happiest man on earth, 'cause I just hooked up with a pure and innocent mamacita girl with long black hair and quite hot when she trots.

Lydia was a chola in her times, but I guess at a young age she seen the light 'cause she ceased dressing like a chola, and also stopped using her make up all crazy like. For me, it was like love at first site! As time went by, I dropped out of school 'cause the gang life didn't allow me to pursue my education. But at least I completed the 11th grade. So is this what I wish I could do over? Well it's a great part of my life, and education is a major part of one's future. And if this was what I wanted to change and do over, then that would be part of the gang life since I was 12 years of age.

I was born into la vida loca and shall take la vida loca to my tomb! So, moving to a luxurious nostalgia moment that when I speak on it, I get teary eyes, but my heart is filled with jubilation. Let me kindly brief you's on how this Romeo and Juliet romance blossomed to the point where I wish I could do it all over....

As I shared, we as a couple agreed to share intimate feelings with each other and live life as cuddled as possible. We went from candle light dinners, to rose petals in the Jacuzzi! We were so much in love — we discussed bringing a child into this world and be one happy family. So we went on to set a foundation for a child. We prepared ourselves not knowing what lay before our future, 'cause we took one day at a time.

I got a job at Bekin's Storage, delivering furniture. It was great pay. Plus both families assisted us financially to rent our two-bedroom house, and that's when life started for two young people madly in love. Lydia's stomach started to grow, and I was the happiest man on earth especially when going to the pediatrician visits. When we were told that we were going to be parents to a baby girl that feeling was so complete. We started shopping for baby clothes and all baby's necessities. I arranged a baby shower for Lydia. And at 7 months pregnant, we enrolled in La Maze classes. This was the most inspiring ethical motivated aspect of our lives, especially that we were the youngest couple there, and only Chicano couple. We learned a lot of each other's qualities, demeanor that we hadn't learned about. I learned to appreciate a woman more, and the 9-month period when a woman has a baby as we concluded the La Maze classes, low and behold.

Contractions were occurring minutes apart and kaboom... Jasmine Leigh Ruiz was born on the 6th of September. And we became parents at a young age. Them came the decision-making within myself that were erupting like a volcano. I started hanging out with hoodlums from the barrio all over again. And deja vu reappeared. I failed to make good decisions for our lil' family of three. I started using drugs again behind Lydia's back and stayin' out late with my so called friends and on the prowl I went again, as I did when I was active in my younger days. Our lil' family started fumbling astray and by the time I knew — it was too late. We separated and our daughter was left with one parent at home (her mom Lydia) and me a 1,000 miles away. My decision-making was clouded by narcotics and there went what I sought in life.

My wish I could do over would be my decision making when I was Lydia's boyfriend and Jasi's father and not allowing the hoodlum life govern me and my judgments. I actually thought my old habits wouldn't be a factor in our lives, and it was. Now, how would I go about doing it all over again? Hmmmm... I would start by paying attention more to family agendas, what being a father was all about. I would have consulted with Lydia about my decisions and respect and honor her wishes. I would have put my daughter's yearning cries before anything. We should have spoke of marriage and conversation about us. What's best for us as a whole? I can say that today I would have done it different, and my decision making would have not been with my chums, but rather with my lil' family of three, and instead of going out with my chums. I would spend my time with Lydia and our precious daughter. I would spend quality time with my family — show that I care and cherish our

continued on next page

RICHARD RUIZ (CONT.)

continued from previous page

special time with each other. I would have established a concrete foundation for our daughters aims and be a friend, a father, and a lover as never before. I would have consulted with Lydia about my thoughts decisions that pertained to us as a family. And not allow my emotions to get the best of me and cease all activity with the barrio.

I should have honored what we discussed from the beginning on being a couple, lovers, parents for our future... today I would have taken a whole new approach to our sacred bond, and I would have asked Lydia to be my bride and share our vows. I would ask Lydia what makes her happy and — is she happy with me? If I would have consulted with Lydia about my decisions I believe I wouldn't be behind these concrete walls. Jasmine would have had both parents in the household. Yes, my selfish decision-making is what I would do all over again. Dialoguing with Lydia would have been the backbone tour future. I honestly believe if I would have consulted with Lydia on any aspect of our lives, our relationship would still stand today as a happy family — 'cause once we separated I landed in the county jail, then to prison, where I have been since 1990!!

I have gone into retrospection of my long lost life, and had the wisdom and knowledge I have today we would be ocean and it's shoreline's melody in harmony. Every time I have the luxury to listen to those oldies but goodies, I go back to life and those irresponsible decisions I made. I say to myself, why didn't I consult with Lydia as normal couples did? I guess I can say I was somewhat arrogant and actually thought I was making the right choices. I should have stayed away from my old barrio chums, drugs, and paid more attention to our family. That's what I would do all over again and that would of have been consulting with my baby's mama about decisions and being more open with our relationship and cared for the feelings of the woman who adored me. Please keep in mind that I don't regret setting a foundation for our daughter Jasmine but merely how I went about my downfall decisions that I made. Truly interacting my thoughts with Lydia could have solved our departure from one another.

You know the irony of all this is I had wrote Lydia letting her know that I apologize for my selfish judgments back when, and that I've learned from my mistakes. Living like a family was my goal. When in a relationship one should allow both minds to set a judgment for the betterment of love, and the importance of life, and what life has to offer. I must say I missed out on a beautiful life as a friend, lover, father and parent. So over all, my decision-making back when is key to what I would do over. I sincerely hope that my personal life will alert our young minds to be in concert with each other on family decisions, judgments 'cause this affects the family as a whole. Thank you!

Moving on to a path of my choice. Well I will continue noting on decisions and choices of my life and when the day comes to be released from these concrete walls in 2005, I wanna be a part time counselor for our youths and use my life as a study guide for wisdom and positivity for an awaking of our young minds.

I had a decision to make when I entered these concrete walls. I decided that I wanted to be this hardcore vato and when this was established, I no longer had choices to do what I felt was right, one had to go with the flow. But now reality has shined upon my soul as a rainbow does when blossoming its beautiful colors. Finally it took a decade to comprehend the my mistakes I did when I was with Lydia. Our youths need educated minds that have been there before to guide them with our wisdom, experience and let them know that being part of a gang and encircled with drugs, will only endanger their lives, and ruin their future lives.

See when our youths are born into La Vida Loca, the ghetto life, all they know is hustling and putting the grind down. See it would be nice that our youths would find a job flipping burgers, newspaper routes, instead they were brainwashed by all this madness in their lives and they grow up knowing nothing but the ghetto life. The Beat Within is doing an outstanding job for our youths especially allowing them to let out their thoughts, vaporize their cries, and expanding The Beat Within to different states, countries, and lots of people are contributing to our youths with positive notes.

I can't wait to contribute myself to our youths and in hopes that my long lost path can be of help change some yougstas minds so they can see the light and detour their paths towards a better life, their responsibilities, and what they are capable of doing. Our youths are very brilliant and have the knowledge within themselves. All they need to do is explore the unexplored and challenge themselves when obstacles come upon their paths.

I enjoy how The Beat Within picks topics for our youths to take on. What I wanna do when I depart form here is hook up a study guide with questions of today teen's and what they do today from habits, chores, group dating, single dating and self. Kids today tend to find a way out of negativeness and they don't blame themselves but blame others for their flaws. I done this in my past and used to make up lies when I did something wrong. I know there's a lot to cover in this world but us, as adults need to stay one footstep ahead, if not, then we will never put our youths on that positive path. Consoling is a major part of our teens. Whether they comprehend or not, it's up to us to set the pace and plant that seed in their minds. We also need to keep in mind that the gang life is like a second family to those teens who grew up in the barrio, projects, and the vida loca. We also need to listen to our teen's cries 'cause if we don't then that would be a sign to them that we don't care and the teens will do what they want etc.... I know, I experience this with my only daughter. And now I have to start all over and gain her love and respect, also establish trust in our relationship as father to daughter. I will try my hardest to fulfill my daughter's emptiness as well for our youths in general. As we teach them about life, we learn from them about flaws, so it's a circle that we need to magnify.

I sincerely hope that my brief thoughts are grasped and not taken lightly! I wanna see a huge turn around for our teens and their choice making and their judgments! And with this said, God bless all of our teens and thank you for this opportunity... cheers.

Cordially...

The Beat With Out

MING TOY LEE

We defy anyone to read this piece about murder and its effects without shedding tears! Once again, our own colleague and friend, Ming Toy Lee, steps up with a remarkable effort to understand the daily killings we read about on the streets, and to let those with the guns know that they are killing much more than a single human being with each shot. Anne, Matt, Chris and Ming Lee, all real people with families who loved them, all victims of street violence leaving in their wake a world of broken dreams and broken hearts, over and over again, by those left behind.

My Heart Is Broken

Hey, what's up y'all? I am so heart broken from all the deaths that's going on here in the Bay. What's really? What's going on? I don't understand how these people can just go around killing people. Are their hearts so cold and life so useless that they feel the need to take someone else's life? Or is the money so low that they are willing to take another man and woman life for it? I mean what is it? Do they even know that this can lead to death themselves or going to jail for the rest of their lives?

Whatever it is, I want to let everyone know that this is sad and ridiculous. Wake up young people because it's serious. Death is always serious.

It hurts me so bad because I had some type of relationship with most of the young men and woman who's been pronounced dead. Ming Lee, I met him at In and Out Burger. He was getting at my friend. What was so cool about meeting him was his name (Ming Lee), what his friends called him, and what my real name is. I didn't even believe him, but he showed me the tattoos on his arm and sho enough, it read Ming Lee.

Ever since then, he and I was cool. He even came to my house, ate, and played dominos with me. I will never forget our times we've shared. But now someone has taken those brief moments away, and my heart is broken.

Chris was someone who I played with as a child in the projects. A sweet handsome man. As we got older, he moved on, but I always still seen him. And the times that I did get to see him I always told him, "Chris be careful, Kay Boo?" You could tell by his face expression that he always appreciated my comment, and understood what I meant. Chris, I will truly miss you, no doubt. But now someone has taken those brief moments away, and my heart is broken.

Matthew (Matt), my heart goes out to you and your family. Matt was a very close friend to my husband, which is how we met. This man was truly a comedian. Every time I would see him, he would always say something crazy that would have everyone laughing. He was truly the light in a lot of lives, and you will be truly missed. But now someone has taken those brief moments away and my heart is broken.

Now it's May 22, '04, and I can't believe what I'm seeing and hearing on TV. They're saying a woman named Anne has been killed. I didn't know if I knew this person or not, but once they showed her picture, I couldn't believe who I was seeing. I knew this girl, and I couldn't help but to feel the hot tears roll down my face for this woman and her family.

First thing that came to my mind was, "Now these people are really going crazy. Why would they want to kill her? A young woman at that! Feel me? That's crazy. And as I sat on the couch crying, I thought about everyone that's been killed recently, and anger crept upon me. I knew I couldn't keep this all in, so I started to write, and this is what came out.

My heart is broken, and I want everyone to know this, because people need to realize that when they kill someone, it just doesn't affect the person who's done the killin', or the one who's now resting in peace, or the family of these young men and women, but it affects the world. People are hurting from this. I'm hurting, and I just wish people could find another way of expressing their hurt and pain.

God bless to all the families that's going through this time of pain and anger. Just think of the good times that we've shared with these individuals. May you all rest in peace.

And also my heart goes out to Ray-Ray family. I didn't know you, but my niece Ebony has so many pictures of you in her room, and she will truly miss you.

God Bless to all…

ANDREW GARCIA

This is the second time Andrew Garcia graces the pages of our Beat Without section. We are so happy to hear from him. In the following poems he writes about a newfound friendship. It's always good to have a real friend for they are hard to find. Andrew writes us from a correctional facility in California

You Walked Into My Life

A new year just beginning
Each day a fresh, new start
To fulfill your hopes and pursue the dreams
Sustained within your heart.

We cannot tell just yet
If the day will bring sunshine or rain,
But each of us has the power
To not live life in vain.

I know that tears must sometimes fall
To help me stand up strong and tall,
All strength and power is yours to give,
Your hand is there each day I live.

The heart can be a lonely place
When no one comes to call
But when someone says, "I love you!"
We feel we're ten feet tall!

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The heart can be a lonely place
When no one comes to call
But when someone says, "I love you!"
We feel we're ten feet tall!

Why do we run and doubt and fear?
Because it is hard to see things clear.
Oh, wonder of this time and place
The human being tries to run the race.

CYNTHIA BAALERUD

The following poem was sent to us by Cynthia Baalerud, the mother of a young man who is incarcerated in Michigan. Cynthia found The Beat through our website, www.thebeatwithin.org, and felt compelled to share this poem with us. Though she wrote it for her own children, it is something that we know many of you — and many of your mothers — will feel deeply, and it serves as an important reminder of how your lives affect the lives of other people in unintended ways. We thank Cynthia for reaching out to us, and for entrusting us with her heartfelt words.

A Mother's Love For Her Child

A Mother's love:
Is unconditionally everlasting.
A bond never to be severed.
Protecting and nurturing,
Growing deeper, with her every breath.
The miracle of giving birth,
To her beautiful babe
Is just the beginning,
To the many miracles that only a mother
Is ever blessed to experience.
As her small babe takes its first breath,
Miraculously in sync,
She takes her first breath
As she is reborn in union with her child.

From this very moment,
With every heartbeat,
Every breath, sleeping and waking moment,
She lives for her child.
For in a mother's heart,
She and her child
co-exist almost as one.

When her child suffers pain,
Much in the same,
She feels their pain.
When her child is sad,
She feels their sadness,
When her child is happy,
She experiences that happiness,
When her child cries,
(Though often unseen),
She cries with them.
If her child travels a troubled path,
She asks herself: did I lead him there?
Through her child's successes,
She also feels success.

So, you see my child,
From your first breath in life,
I have always been with you!
When you took your first step,
I took that step with you.
As you discover and grow
I discover and grow along side you.
When your heart aches,
My heart aches for you.
Your fears, in essence,
Become my fears to help you overcome.
Your tears, become my tears,
Your laughter becomes
the music to my heart.

With each of your heartbeats,
My heart beats two.
One for me, and one for you.

Yes my child, you are an individual.
Nevertheless, always remember,
The lifeline that connected you to me
May have been severed at birth,
But in my heart and soul
You will always be,
Connected and a part of me.

So, as you begin to make a life of your own,
Please forgive me
When my grasp seems too tight,
It's so very hard to let go, you know.
Please always remember, my child,
In my heart always, you will forever be:
One of my lifelines, and a part of me.
I will love you throughout all Eternity!

AMBITIOUS 1

We are proud to introduce Ambitious 1 to our pages of The Beat Without. Ambitious 1 was once incarcerated in San Mateo Juvenile Hall, went to rehab and is now a free man. He is the brother of the famous Poetic Prisoner. So, folks, tell us if you like it...

It's A Set Up...

Hook:
You gotta keep yo' head up
I'm tired and fed up
'Cause it's a set up (2x)

Verse One:
From day one they put the drugs on our streets
We got hooked now we runnin' deep
Now we here sellin' drugs
Our 'hood got overdosed and is catchin' bugs
Then from the shhh we see on TV and rap tales
Thankin' that all life's about is money, thuggin', and females
Screw the system screw my foes
Y'all need to help me out, fo' those that know
'Cause after the thuggin' and the pros
You get caught up, now you layin' low
Next thang you know 5-0 is bangin' at yo' doe
All you hear is put yo' hands up hit the flo'
Ya realized you got framed
Yellin' "I'm not the one to blame"
It was that cop who knew you was seein' fame
You know he set you up but you forgot his name
(Hook 2x)

Verse Two:
Now you sittin' in tha back seat
The cop is reachin' back yo' ass is gettin' beat
Should you fight back or accept defeat?
Now you in jail, got death row, no chance for bail
Everyday you see people's life get took
Robbas, killas, and crooks
And you didn't even commit the crime
You doin' a dirty punk cops time
Is our people blind?
They don't wanna stand up and you confined?
You either gone die or spend yo' life in prison
But life in prison's barely livin'
The stories half told but the otha half is hidden
The stories in the safe but the safes been forbidden
(Hook 2x)

Verse 3:
They say hit the showers and you don't gotta choice
They set you up 'cause you had a voice
They tell you tomorrow you goin' to death
Ya breathin' ya last days breath
Ya don't know what to do
So you just play it cool
Ya sit on the bed and stare at the wall
Realizin' that tomorrow you gone lose it all
Ya head gets heavy and ya eye lids fall
Next thang you know the guards is wakin' you up
Damn — you outta luck
Now you walkin' down the tier the inmates is talkin'
Then a ninja yell, "He's a dead man walkin'"
You get in the seat and they tie you down
A tear from ya face hits tha ground
Ya hear the sirens sound
The clock counts down
5...4...3...2...you 'bout to be gone
And now they won...1
The gas comes out and you can't even think
And right before you see death you see that cop and he winks

Always be aware, no matter what your situation is right now, you will make it worse or better by the choices you make. If you get a little busy feeling sorry for yourself, remember what Abraham Lincoln said: "I once felt sorry for myself because I had no shoes until I met a man with no feet."

check out the rest of SunMan'sLight's BWO piece on page 57